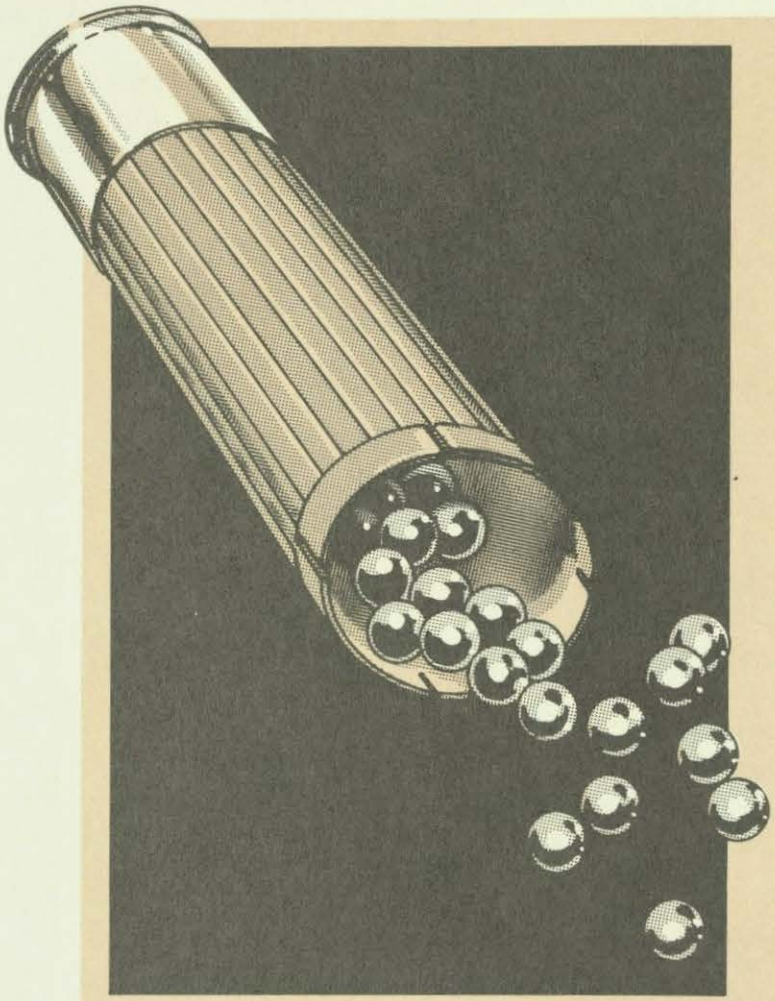
FLORIDA WILDLIFE®

Volume 41, Number 5 September-October 1987

DUCK HUNTERS



- Brevard County
- Broward County
- Citrus County
- Collier County
- Dade County
- Leon County (Including Lake Talquin and the flood plains of the Ochlockonee River lying adjacent to Leon County.)
- Osceola County
- Polk County
- Volusia County
- Lake George
- Lochloosa Lake
- Lake Miccosukee
- Lake Okeechobee (The area lying lakeward of, and bounded by, the Lake Okeechobee levee, by the SR 78 Kissimmee River bridge and by SR 78 from its intersections with the Lake Okeechobee levee at points near Lakeport and the old Sportsman's Village site).
- Orange Lake (Alachua County)
- Lake Ponte Vedra (All waters north of Guana Dam)
- Lake Harbor Public Waterfowl Area in Palm Beach County
- Occidental Wildlife Management Area
- All of the Occidental phosphate mine pits east of US Hwy. 41; west of SR 135; south of SR 6 and north of White Springs, all located in Township 1 North; Ranges 15 and 16 East and Township 1 South, Ranges 15 and 16 East in Hamilton County
- The St. Johns River flood plain lying in Lake, Seminole and Orange counties
- The portion of Lake Rousseau lying in Levy and Marion counties
- That portion of Everglades Conservation Area Two in Palm Beach County
- All National Wildlife Refuges that allow waterfowl hunting
- Chassahowitzka Wildlife Management Area and the state waters of the Gulf of Mexico in Hernando County north of Raccoon Point.

NONTOXIC STEEL SHOT MUST BE USED IN ALL GAUGE SHOTGUNS WHEN HUNTING DUCKS IN THE ABOVE AREAS.

For additional information, call the nearest office of the Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission

TOLL FREE: Lakeland: 1/800-282-8002
Ocala: 1/800-342-9620
Lake City: 1/800-342-8105
West Palm Beach: 1/800-432-2046
Panama City: 1/800-342-1676

FLORIDA WILDLIFE®

Volume 41, Number 5 September-October 1987

Birds and mammals, page 20.

Getting wet for bigmouths, page 36.

John M. Waters Jr.
Editor

Peggy Perkerson
Art Editor

Paige Moody
Assistant Editor

Mary Beth Savage
Circulation Manager

Sharon Marshall
Electronic Typesetting

William A. Greer
Contributing Photographer

Steven D. Lewis
Laverne Roberts
Circulation Assistants

Rose Printing Company Inc.
Commercial Printing

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Color Separations

2 **Uncle Jake**, By Bob Kornegay

5 **A Summary of Florida's 1987-88 Hunting Areas**

14 **Delicate Balance—Peregrine Falcon**, By Brian Toland

15 **Meet Peggy Perkerson**, FLORIDA WILDLIFE's Art Editor

20 **Birds and Mammals: 1987 Photography Contest Winners**

28 **Managing for White-Tails**, By Perry Oldenburg

32 **Exploring New Waters for Bass**, By Larry Larsen

36 **Getting Wet for Bigmouths**, By Bob McNally

44 **Florida's 1987-88 Hunting Seasons**

DEPARTMENTS

-13- **It's The Law**

-40- **The Emerging Naturalist**

-42- **Hunter Education News**

-46- **Conservation Update**

OUR COVERS

John Flower's noble photograph of a white-tailed buck, shown on our front cover, and his spectacular view of a bald eagle on our back cover were first place winners in the birds and mammals categories of our 1987 nature photography contest.

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Publisher

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UNCLE JAKE

By Bob Kornegay

It seemed a little strange that the teen-age boy doted on the old gentleman so willingly. It was as if someone was paying him to do it. Henry, his name was, saw to it that Uncle Jake wanted for nothing.

When I first saw Henry and Uncle Jake I wondered about the boy's motives. I mean, how many 17-year-olds willingly take an old man fishing and camping—without expecting anything in return? And it was no small chore. Uncle Jake and Henry were not your classic fiftyish or sixtyish grandpa-and-the-kid situation. Uncle Jake was 84.

I met the two outdoor partners on the bank of one of my favorite fishing lakes, a small, seldom-used impoundment nestled deep in the north Florida woods. It was one of those rare, cool September weekends; a perfect time to throw a few bare essentials into a knapsack and enjoy a brief respite away from the pressures of educational red tape and a middle-school classroom.

My tent was pitched, my coffee was brewing, and I was as much at peace with myself and my surroundings as one can be in this modern world.

I found an ideal location in a half-sunny, half-shaded area along the lakeshore, where I could lie on my back in the soft grass and be simultaneously warmed by the midmorning sun, and cooled by the soft breezes coming from across the pond. It was a rare time of beautiful boredom, when even a fish's bite would have been an insufferable annoyance.

After a mere half-hour of cloud watching, daydreaming and sublime laziness, my solitude was shattered by the guttural sound of an old pick-up truck on its last miles. One look at the four-wheeled white elephant made it hard for me to believe it could possibly have made it four miles off the main highway through the pines to the secluded spot I had claimed as my own. But there it was, complete with its two passengers, heartlessly about to ruin my weekend.

My disappointment turned to surprise when I saw the truck's two occupants get out and begin to unload camping equipment from the rusty pick-up bed. In all my life I had never seen a more unlikely pair of outdoorsmen. One of the two was a youngster who looked very high-schoolish and seemed rather out of place. The other was an old fellow in faded overalls who moved slowly and walked with a decided limp.

They finished arranging their few bags and bundles on the ground a few yards from my campsite, then the boy spotted me stretched out on the bank. He ambled over.

"Catchin' any?" he asked. He was a good-looking kid and I wondered what a young fellow his age could possibly be doing out camping on a Saturday morning, instead of lazing around the house thinking about which movie he and the head cheerleader were going to take in later that evening.

"Nah," I answered a little too sharply.

"Name's Henry Johnson," the boy said, seemingly unperturbed by my lack of civility. "Uncle Jake and me thought we'd camp out this weekend and maybe catch a shellcracker or two. You mind if we bed down over there next to you?"

"Not a bit," I lied. "Help yourself."

Henry nodded, turned and jogged back down the bank to the campsite where Uncle Jake had taken it upon himself to open up a folding chair and take his leisure. A moment later, from the corner of my eye, I watched while Henry obviously explained to the old man that they weren't "intruding," and began to set up camp.

I got up from my cozy nook by the lake and made my way back to my tent. Curiosity having gotten the better of me, I strolled over and squatted on my haunches while Henry hammered the tent stakes into the hard ground.

I've always liked to theorize about personalities while studying a person's physical attributes, and from the look of Henry's lithe, well-muscled frame and his grace of movement, I took him to be quite an athlete. Football, I guessed. Wide receiver for the Bearcats or some other such, Southern small-town high school.

"You fellows do much camping?" I asked to open. Not much of an opening, since it was obvious from the patches and stitches on the battered tent that I was in the company of two veteran woodsmen.

"Now and again," came Henry's reply. I sensed a naive, Deep-South country innocence in Henry—something rare among most guys his age. I began to feel guilty about my earlier wish that he and the old man had never shown up.

"Uncle Jake and me been campin' and huntin' and fishin' together since I was just a little fella," Henry said as he pegged down the final stake. "Been about 12 years now, I reckon."

At that I detected the faintest smile on the old man's face. He had yet to speak the first word, either to me or Henry.

Then Henry said, "I guess you noticed by now that Uncle Jake don't talk much."

I thought perhaps he was apologizing for the old man's ▷

rudeness and I tactfully replied, "Well, I just figured him to be a man of few words."

"Ain't that," the boy said. "About six years ago, when he was 78, he came down with some sort of growth on his voice box. Even though the doctors said it wasn't cancer or anything like that, they had to remove the growth.

"They got it all and Uncle Jake was fine for a year or two after that but the growth came back. It didn't cause him no pain, but it just plumb shut down his talking. Now the doctors say he's too old for another operation."

"Sorry to hear it," I said, not knowing anything else to say.

"Ain't that big a deal," Henry said. "I don't mind a bit. It used to be that I couldn't get a word in edgewise around Uncle Jake. He used to jabber so much he could worry the horns off a billy goat."

With that, Henry playfully tossed a tent stake at Uncle Jake, hitting the toe of one of the old man's brogans. Uncle Jake smiled a wide grin, showing all that was left of his yellowed, tobacco-stained teeth as he jokingly balled up one gnarled, aged fist and shook it at the boy.

"He ain't really my uncle," Henry continued. "He's really my granddad. All us children just grew up callin' him Uncle Jake, for some reason or another."

Uncle Jake looked at me and rotated his index finger around one ear as if to say, "He's crazy."

As Henry and I sat and talked, Uncle Jake hobbled over to my campfire and borrowed himself a cup of coffee.

"Need any help, Uncle Jake?" Henry called out.

Uncle Jake turned around. A belligerent expression in his not-so-sharp-anymore eyes seemed to say, "When I need some smart-aleck youngun' to help me, I'll ask!"

Henry winked at me and grinned. I began to feel good about the twist of fate that had brought us together.

Later that afternoon, the three of us fished from the lake bank for a while. Henry brought Uncle Jake's folding chair down by the lake for him and as we spent more time together, I realized there were an awful lot of other things that required Henry's assistance.

I found myself thinking I had never seen someone do as much to insure the comfort of one old man as Henry Johnson did for Uncle Jake that September weekend.

He massaged the old man's stooped shoulders when they became cramped, tied on his fishing hooks, fetched water, removed fish from the hook and put them on the stringer. He did all that and more. And, that marvelous 17-year-old young man seemed to enjoy every minute of it.

Near the end of the day, Uncle Jake forgot to bait his hook and tossed the bare barb into the water. Henry was silent.

Uncle Jake was surprised when he lifted his line to find nothing on the end. One could almost read his thoughts. "Scoundrel got my worm," his eyes seemed to say.

"Dogged if he didn't," Henry replied as if the old man had really spoken. "And I never even saw your cork move."

I cleaned our catch for the day on the bank while Henry helped his grandfather, who was getting sore from sitting so long, back to the tent for a nap before supper. A short time later, Henry returned to help me with the fish.

"You know, Mr. Bob," he said reflectively, "there's people who ask why I spend so much time with Uncle Jake when I ought to be out havin' a good time partyin' and chasin' girls and such, but I never really know how to answer 'em.

"Could be," he continued, "that I owe him something. He's the one who taught me how to act in the woods. He bought me my first gun and showed me how to shoot. He took me fishin' when I wasn't worth much more than a can of worms. I caught my first fish sittin' beside him—not too far from where we are right now."

I looked into the kid's sharp blue eyes and told him, "You don't owe Uncle Jake a thing, Henry. Grandparents wouldn't have it any other way."

"I know that, deep down," Henry replied. "I really think I spend so much time with him just because I like to."

Sunday came and Henry and Uncle Jake broke camp and went home to wherever home was. They left me happy that I had, for once in my life, met a kid like Henry, and sad because I was not more like him when I was his age.

I said a prayer one night, not long after that camping trip, that went something like this:

"Lord, there are a lot of things in this life I want to do before I leave it, so, if you can see your way clear, let me grow to be an old man. And Lord, if you can manage that, I'd like to have just one more favor. Could you maybe arrange for me to have a Henry, too?"

A SUMMARY FOR

FLORIDA'S 1987-88 HUNTING AREAS

Compiled By John Waters Jr.

General Information: Unless stated otherwise, a Regular Quota Hunt Permit is required for the November 14-22 General Gun Hunt on Type I wildlife management areas. Consult individual wildlife management area brochures (available at the Commission's regional offices and at county tax collector's offices) for 1987-88 season dates, permit requirements, specific rules, regulations and limits for the area in which you plan to hunt. In addition to a valid Hunting License Stamp, a Wildlife Management Area Stamp is required to hunt in any of these areas. For hunting waterfowl, both a federal "Duck Stamp" and a Florida Waterfowl Stamp are required. A Florida Turkey Stamp is required to hunt turkey. Archery and Muzzleloading Gun stamps are required only when hunting with these weapons during their respective special seasons, but are not required for these weapons during General Gun Season. Consult "*1987-88 Migratory Game Bird Regulations for Duck and Coot*"and "*1987-88 Migratory Game Bird Regulations for Dove, Snipe, Woodcock, Rail, Moorhen, Crow and Early Duck Season*" for additional information about hunting migratory birds.

Open Seasons (unless stated otherwise for specific areas): General Hunting Season: November 14, 1987-January 24, 1988 in the Northwest Region and November 14, 1987-January 10 in the remainder of Florida. Archery: October 3-November 1, 1987 statewide except south of State Road 72 to Arcadia and S.R. 70 to Fort Pierce where the season will be September 5-October 4, 1987. Muzzleloading Gun: November 6 through 8, 1987 statewide.

Archery/Muzzleloading Gun Season: February 6-21, 1988 in the Northwest Region only. Due to the amount of public use of most wildlife management areas, it has become necessary to impose quotas to limit the numbers of persons using these areas during times of peak demand. Consult "*Florida Hunting Handbook Regulations Summary for 1987-88*" and "*Florida Freshwater Sport Fishing Guide & Regulations Summary 1987-88*" for additional information.

NORTHWEST REGION

APALACHEE (Jackson County): 7,952 acres of longleaf pine and wiregrass habitat and is known for quail and deer hunting. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 24, Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only in Zones A and B). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last season's harvest: deer, fair; gray squirrel, fair; mourning dove, fair; regular duck; fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

APALACHICOLA (Leon, Liberty, Franklin, Wakulla counties): 558,380 acres dominated by pine flatwoods and titi swamps. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through 22); Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8); General Gun (November 14 through January 24); Small Game (January 25 through March 6); Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (February 6 through 21); Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24); Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat (October 1 through March 6). Has dog hunt areas. Last season's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, fair; black bear, good. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round. ▷

BLACKWATER (Santa Rosa and Okaloosa counties): 192,560 acres of pine flatwoods and gently rolling hills covered by pines and turkey oaks, recognized for quail and deer hunting. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1); Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8 in the Still Hunt Area only); General Gun (November 14 through January 10); Small Game (January 11 through March 6); Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (February 6 through 14 in the Still Hunt Area only); Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24); Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat (may be pursued with dogs from May 1 through August 31 and February 15 through March 13 south of S.R. 4; and May 1 through March 13 north of S.R. 4). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last season's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, fair; mourning dove, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round except on the fish hatchery.

CHAMPION INTERNATIONAL (Escambia County): 21,038 acres known for deer and quail hunting. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 1), Small Game (January 2 through March 6 Saturdays and Sundays only), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (February 6 through 7 and 13 through 14). Still hunting only. Last season's harvest: deer, good; gray squirrel, poor. Fishing and frogging are prohibited.

EDWARD BALL (Gulf County): 66,270 acres of pine forests and titi stands. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 24 for the first nine days, then Thursdays through Sundays only), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (February 6 through 14 on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Last season's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

G. U. PARKER (Gulf and Calhoun counties): 22,480 acres known for deer and squirrel hunting. Open hunts: Archery (October 24 through November 5), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 24—with the area open for the first nine days then only on Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays). Still hunting only. Last season's harvest: deer, excellent; gray squirrel, good; wild hog, fair. Fishing and Frogging permitted only during periods when hunting is allowed.

JOE BUDD (Gadsden County): A 6,250-acre primitive method hunting area having agricultural fields and oak/pine woodlands; one of the most intensively managed public Wildlife Management Areas in Florida. Open hunts: Archery (December 4 through 27 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only and February 5 through 21 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (January 1 through 31 only on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays), Small Game (October 3 through November 28 only on Saturdays and Wednesdays), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24 only on Saturdays and Sundays). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: gray squirrel, good; mourning dove, fair. Fishing and other recreational uses permitted during daylight hours when hunting is not allowed.

LA FLORESTA PERDIDA (Escambia County): 29,989 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 24 through November 13), General Gun (November 14 through January 1), Small Game (January 2 through 14, January 18 through 21 and January 25 through March 6), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (January 15 through 17 and 22 through 24 in designated areas only), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, excellent; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, good. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

MOORE'S PASTURE UNIT (Bay and Washington counties): 43, 832 acres. This area is a unit of Point Washington Wildlife Management Area. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 1), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (February 6, 7, 12, 13, 14, 19, 20 and 21 only), Spring Turkey March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, poor; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, fair. Fishing and frogging are prohibited.

OCHLOCKONEE RIVER (Leon County): 2,716 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (November 14 through January 24 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only), Small Game (January 25 through March 6), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24 on Saturdays and Sundays only). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, fair. Fishing and other recreational uses permitted during daylight hours when hunting is not allowed.

POINT WASHINGTON (Bay and Walton counties): 136,775 acres of primarily pine forests and titi stands. Also see Moore's Pasture Unit above. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1); Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8 in the Still Hunt Area only); General Gun (November 14 through January 24); Small Game (January 25 through March 6); Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24); Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (February 6 through 21); Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat (November 14 through March 6 in the Dog Hunt Area only). Has

dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, poor; gray squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

ROBERT BRENT (Gadsden and Liberty counties): 80,250 acres having many small creeks and titi stands. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 24), Small Game (January 25 through March 6), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (February 6 through 21), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

TALQUIN (Leon County): 2,843 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 24 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only), Small Game (January 25 through March 6), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24 on Saturdays and Sundays only). Has still hunt areas only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, fair. Fishing and other recreational uses permitted during daylight hours when hunting is not allowed.

Lt. Stan Kirkland, public information officer for the Northwest Region, contributed to this report.

NORTHEAST REGION:

ANDREWS (Levy County): 3,800 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 9 through 11 and 16 through 18), Muzzleloading Gun (October 30 through November 1 and November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 27 through 29), Small Game (January 15 through 17 and 22 through 24), Spring Turkey (March 25 through 27; and April 15 through 17). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, excellent; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, excellent. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

AUCILLA (Jefferson, Taylor and Wakulla counties): 172,541 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through 18 south of U.S. 98, west of the Aucilla River; and October 3 through November 1 in the remaining portion of the area), General Gun (November 14 through January 10); Small Game (January 11 through March 6); Spring turkey (March 19 through April 24); Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat (July 1 through October 1). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, excellent; spring turkey, excellent; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; mourning dove, excellent; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted during the Archery, General Gun and Spring Turkey hunts in the Still Hunt areas in Jefferson and Wakulla counties; and year-round in the remainder of the area.

CAMP BLANDING (Clay County): 70,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 2 through 4 and 9 through 11 north of S.R. 16 and C.R. 215 and east of C.R. 225 only), Muzzleloading Gun October 16 through 18 and 23 through 25 north of S.R. 16 and C.R. 215 and east of C.R. 225 only), Supervised Youth (October 3, 4, 10, 11, 17 and 18 in the Cantonment Area only), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (See "Camp Blanding Spring Turkey Hunt Map and Regulations Summary"). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, excellent; fall turkey, good; spring turkey, excellent; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor. Fishing permitted during periods when hunting is allowed and on fish management areas when hunting is not allowed.

CARY (Duval and Nassau counties): 3,400 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 24, 25, November 14, 15, 28, 29, December 19, 20 and January 2, 3). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; gray squirrel, poor; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, good. Fishing and frogging is regulated by the Division of Forestry.

CEDAR KEY SCRUB (Levy County): 4,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 9 through 11 and 16 through 18), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 27 through 29 and December 4 through 6). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; gray squirrel, poor; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, good. Access to fishing and frogging is regulated by the Department of Natural Resources.

CYPRESS CREEK (Hamilton County): 19,934 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through 18); Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round. ▷

GULF HAMMOCK (Levy County): 27,675 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Dog hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; early duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted only during periods when hunting is allowed.

JENA (Dixie County): 54,398 acres. Open hunts: General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, good; early duck, fair; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

LAKE BUTLER (Baker, Columbia and Union countries): 106,479 acres. Open hunts: General Gun (November 14 through January 10); Small Game (January 11 through March 6); Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24); Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat (July 1 through October 1). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; early duck, fair; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round except in that portion designated as Cummer's Pasture, which will be open only during the General Gun hunt.

LOCHLOOSA (Alachua County): 31,751 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through 29), Muzzleloading Gun (October 30 through November 1 and November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, excellent; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; early duck, good; regular duck, good. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round except on those portions designated as Walk-In areas, which will be open only during periods when hunting is allowed.

NASSAU (Nassau County): 40,168 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Small Game (January 11 through March 6), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

OCCIDENTAL (Hamilton County): 3,500 acres. Open hunts: during open seasons for waterfowl, ducks and coots may be hunted on Wednesdays and Saturdays only. Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: early duck, excellent; regular duck, excellent. Fishing and frogging are prohibited.

OSCEOLA (Columbia and Baker counties): 157,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through 16); Muzzleloading Gun (October 17 through 25); Bear (October 31 through November 8); General Gun (November 14 through January 10); Small Game (January 11 through March 6); Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24); Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat (July 1 through October 1). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good, gray squirrel, poor; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; black bear, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

PERPETUAL (Dixie County): 70,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt and still hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; early duck, good; regular duck, good. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

RAIFORD (Bradford and Union counties): 9,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), Archery/Muzzleloading Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; fall turkey, fair; spring turkey, excellent; gray squirrel, fair; fox squirrel, good; wild hog, poor; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted only during periods when hunting is allowed.

STEINHATCHEE (Dixie and Lafayette counties): 146,600 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1); General Gun (November 14 through January 10); Small Game (January 11 through March 6); Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24); Fox, Raccoon, Opossum and Bobcat (July 1 through October 1). Has dog hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, poor; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

TIDE SWAMP (Taylor County): 20,488 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, excellent; spring turkey, fair; gray squirrel, excellent; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; early duck, good; regular duck, good. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

Lt. Dewey Weaver, public information officer for the Northeast Region, contributed to this report.

CENTRAL REGION:

BULL CREEK (Osceola County): 22,206 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Small Game (January 11 through March 6), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, good; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

CITRUS (Citrus County): 41,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (November 14 through December 6), Muzzleloading Gun (December 12, 13, 26 and 27), Modern Gun (December 19, 20 and January 2, 3), Small Game (January 11 through March 6). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; gray squirrel, good; fox squirrel, good; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

FARMTON (Volusia and Brevard counties): 52,170 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1; Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10. Has still hunt and dog hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, good; fall turkey, good; gray squirrel, good; fox squirrel, poor; wild hog, poor; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted when hunting is allowed.

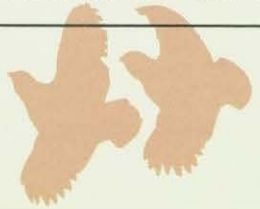
FORT McCOY (Marion County): 14,508 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Small Game (January 11 through January 31), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, good; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted during periods when hunting is allowed.

GEORGIA-PACIFIC (Putnam County): 11,149 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted during periods when hunting is allowed and permitted year-round in Rice Creek Sanctuary.

GUANA RIVER (St. Johns County): 8,700 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 16 through 18 and 23 through 25), Muzzleloading Gun (October 30 through November 1 and November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 20, through 22 and 27 through 29), Small Game (December 4 through 6 and 11 through 13). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, poor; gray squirrel, good; wild hog, good; early duck, poor; regular duck, fair. Fishing permitted year-round from the Guana River Dam and one-half mile north of the dam; only from January 20-November 1 on Lake Ponte Vedre and the area's interior freshwater lakes.

JUMPER CREEK (Sumter County): 10,068 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1, Saturdays and Sundays only), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Small Game (January 11 through January 31), Spring Turkey (March 18 through 20, April 1 through 3 and 8 through 10). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, poor; spring turkey, fair; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; early duck, fair; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted throughout the year.

OCALA (Marion, Lake and Putnam counties): 382,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1); Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8 on Hopkins Prairie Unit only); General Gun (November 14 through January 10); Small Game (January 11 through March 6); Extended Fox, Bobcat and Raccoon (January 11 through April 17). Has still hunt and dog hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, good; gray squirrel, good; wild hog, poor; mourning dove, fair; early duck, fair; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round. ▷



RELAY (Flagler County): 25,463 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1, Saturdays and Sundays only), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; early duck, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted during periods when hunting is allowed.

RICHLOAM (Sumter, Pasco, Hernando and Lake counties): 55,920 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Has dog hunt areas. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, good; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

ROCK SPRINGS RUN STATE PRESERVE (Orange County): 9,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 2 through 4 and 9 through 11), Muzzleloading Gun (October 16 through 18 and 23 through 25), Modern Gun (November 20, 21 and 27 through 29). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, good; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, fair. Access to the area for fishing is regulated by the Department of Natural Resources.

SEMINOLE RANCH (Orange County): 6,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (December 11 through 13 and 18 through 20), Muzzleloading Gun (December 26, 27 and January 2, 3), Modern Gun (January 8 through 10), Small Game (November 21, 22, 28, 29 and December 5 and 6), Spring Turkey (March 18 through 20, 25 through 27 and April 1 through 3). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, fair; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, good; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, good. Fishing and frogging permitted throughout the year.

THREE LAKES (Osceola County): 45,303 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1, Saturdays and Sundays only), Muzzleloading Gun November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Small Game (January 11 through March 6), Spring Turkey (March 19 through April 24). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, excellent; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

TOMOKA (Volusia County): 6,745 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, poor; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, poor; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

TOSOHATCHEE STATE RESERVE (Orange County): 28,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 1 through 4 and 8 through 11), Muzzleloading Gun (October 15 through 18 and 22 through 25), Modern Gun (November 20 through 22 and December 3 through 6), Spring Turkey (March 18 through 20, April 1 through 3 and 15 through 17). Still hunting only. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, excellent. Access to the fishing area is regulated by the Department of Natural Resources.

Lt. Vinard Hitt, information officer for the Central Region, contributed to this report.

SOUTH REGION:

ARBUCKLE (Highlands County): 13,500 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 17 through November 6), Muzzleloading Gun (November 7 through November 15). Hunting with dogs is prohibited; however, following wounded game with a leashed dog is permitted. Has still hunt area. Last year's harvest: deer, excellent; wild hog, poor. Fishing is permitted year-round, but frogging is prohibited.

CECIL M. WEBB (Charlotte County): 65,343 acres. Open hunts: Archery (February 20 and 21), General Gun (October 31 through November 8 on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays and Sundays only, and on November 27). Hunting deer or wild hogs with the aid of dogs is prohibited. Has still hunt area. Last year's harvest; deer, good; wild hog, excellent; mourning dove, good. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

CHASSAHOWITZKA (Hernando County): 15,500 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10). Hunting with dogs other than bird dogs is prohibited west of the Main Grade and on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service portion of the property. This is a newly opened area. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

CROOM (Hernando and Sumter counties): 20,555 acres. Open hunts: General Gun (November 14 through December 6); Small Game (December 7 through March 6); Fox, Raccoon and Bobcat (December 17 through March 13). Hunting with dogs other than bird dogs and hounds used for fox, raccoon or bobcat is prohibited. Last year's harvest: deer, good; gray squirrel, good. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

GREEN SWAMP (Polk, Lake and Sumter counties): 39,430 acres. Open hunts: Archery (October 3 through November 1 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Spring Turkey (March 21 through April 26). Hunting with dogs other than bird dogs is prohibited except that dogs on leash may be used to trail wounded game. Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, excellent; gray squirrel, good; fox squirrel, fair; wild hog, good. Fishing and frogging permitted October 3 through November 1 on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays only; November 14 through January 10, March 19 through April 24, and May 7 through June 26 on Saturdays and Sundays only.

IMC (Polk County): 720 acres. Open hunts: during open seasons for waterfowl, ducks and coots may be hunted Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays only. Last year's harvest: early duck, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging are prohibited.

UPPER HILLSBOROUGH (Pasco and Polk counties): 5,178 acres. Open hunts: Archery (December 12 through 20 and January 2 through January 10 on Saturdays and Sundays only), Muzzleloading Gun (November 14 through December 6 on Saturdays and Sundays only), Small Game (January 16 through February 7 on Saturdays and Sundays only), Spring Turkey (March 23, 24, 30 and 31; April 6, 7 13, 14; 20 and 21). Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

Lt. Jim Farrior, information officer for the South Region, contributed to this report.

EVERGLADES REGION:

BIG CYPRESS (Collier and Monroe counties): 564,320 acres. Open hunts: Archery (September 5 through 27), Muzzleloading Gun (October 3 through 18), General Gun (November 7 through January 3), Small Game (January 4 through February 7), Spring Turkey (March 12 through April 17), Raccoon at Night (January 4 through February 7). Last year's harvest: deer, fair; fall turkey, poor; spring turkey, good; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; early duck, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

BROWN'S FARM (Palm Beach County): 4,460 acres. Open hunts: Archery (September 5 through 27), Muzzleloading Gun (October 3 through 18), General Gun (November 7 through January 3). Last year's harvest: deer, poor; wild hog, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

EAST EVERGLADES WILDLIFE AND ENVIRONMENTAL AREA (Dade County): 55,346 acres. Open hunts: Upper Unit Only: Archery (September 5 through October 4), Muzzleloading Gun (November 6 through 8), General Gun (November 14 through January 10), Small Game (January 11 through March 6). Last year's harvest: deer, poor; wild hog, poor; early duck, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

EVERGLADES AND FRANCIS S. TAYLOR (Dade, Broward and Palm Beach counties):710,000 acres. Open hunts: Archery (September 5 through 27 in Conservation Area 3A North only), Muzzleloading Gun (October 3 through 18 in Conservation Area 3A North only), General Gun-Walk (October 24 through November 1 in Conservation Areas 3A North and 2 only), General Gun-Vehicle (November 7 through 22 under permit only in Conservation Area 3A North, Conservation Area 3A South, Francis S. Taylor Wildlife Management Area [Area 3B] and Conservation Area 2). Last year's harvest: deer, fair; wild hog, poor; early duck, fair; regular duck, fair. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round. ▷

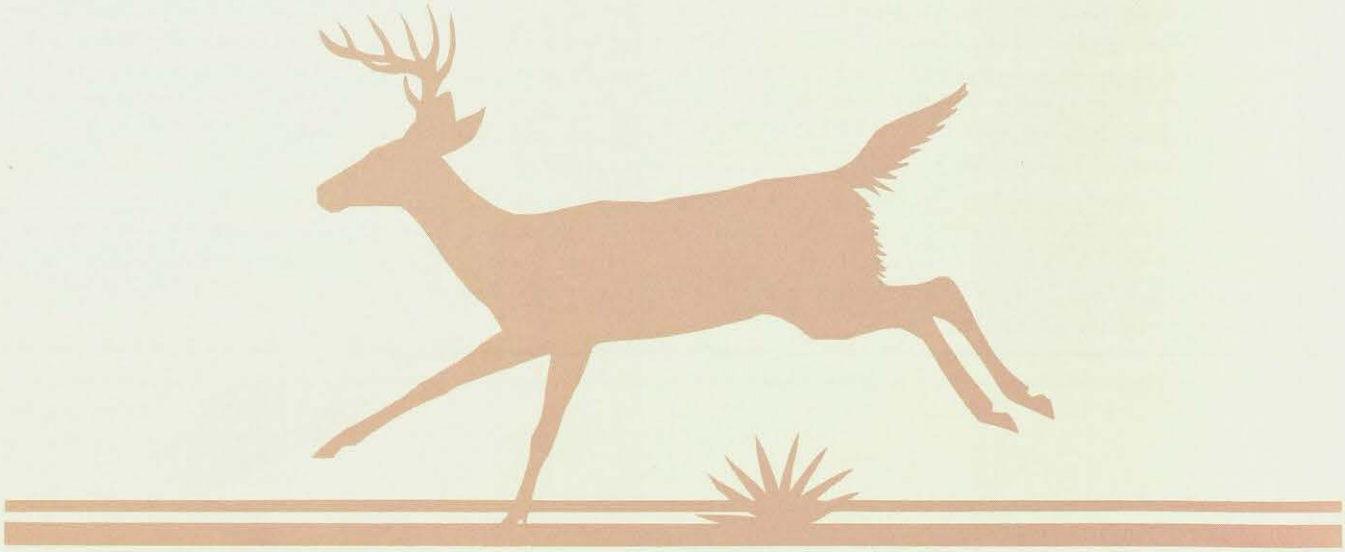
HOLEYLAND (Palm Beach County): 35,350 acres. Open hunts: Archery (September 5 through 27), Muzzleloading Gun (October 3 through 18), General Gun-Walk (October 24 through November 1 and November 28 through January 3), General Gun-Vehicle (November 7 through 22 under permit only). Last year's harvest: deer, fair; wild hog, poor; early duck, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

J. W. CORBETT (Palm Beach County): 57,892 acres. Open hunts: Archery (September 5 through 27), Muzzleloading Gun (October 3 through 18), General Gun (November 7 through January 3), Small Game (January 4 through February 28), Spring Turkey (March 12 through April 17 on Saturdays and Sundays only), Raccoon at Night (January 4 through February 28). Last year's harvest: deer, good; spring turkey, poor; gray squirrel, fair; wild hog, fair; mourning dove, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round except during periods when the area is closed to public access.

LAKE HARBOR PUBLIC WATERFOWL AREA (Palm Beach County): 630 Acres. Open hunts: Early Duck and Regular Duck. This is a newly opened area. Fishing and frogging prohibited.

ROTENBERGER (Palm Beach County): 23,970 acres. Open hunts: Archery (September 5 through 27), Muzzleloading Gun (October 3 through 18 by Quota Permit only), General Gun-Walk (October 24 through November 1 under Permit only), General Gun-Vehicle (November 7 through 22 under permit only). Last year's harvest: deer, fair; wild hog, poor; early duck, poor; regular duck, poor. Fishing and frogging permitted year-round.

Lt. Jim Hufffstodt, public information officer for the Everglades Region, contributed to this report.



It's The Law

By Major Kyle Hill

As a bow hunter, am I required to wear blaze (flourescent) orange during Florida's upcoming archery season for deer?

No. This year, an amendment was made to *Florida Statutes* to require that blaze orange be worn by hunters on public lands; however, the new law exempts bow hunters from the requirement while they are hunting deer on public lands during seasons restricted to hunting with a bow and arrow only. The statute does not require either bow hunters or gun hunters to wear blaze orange while hunting on private lands in Florida.

Is a $100 license still required to sell alligator products such as belts, bags or alligator skulls?

No. The Florida Legislature repealed the state's license requirements, as specified in *Florida Statute* 372.6645, which levied an annual license fee of $100. It is still unlawful, however, for any person to sell any alligator products that are manufactured in the form of a stuffed baby alligator or other baby crocodilia.

Delicate Balance

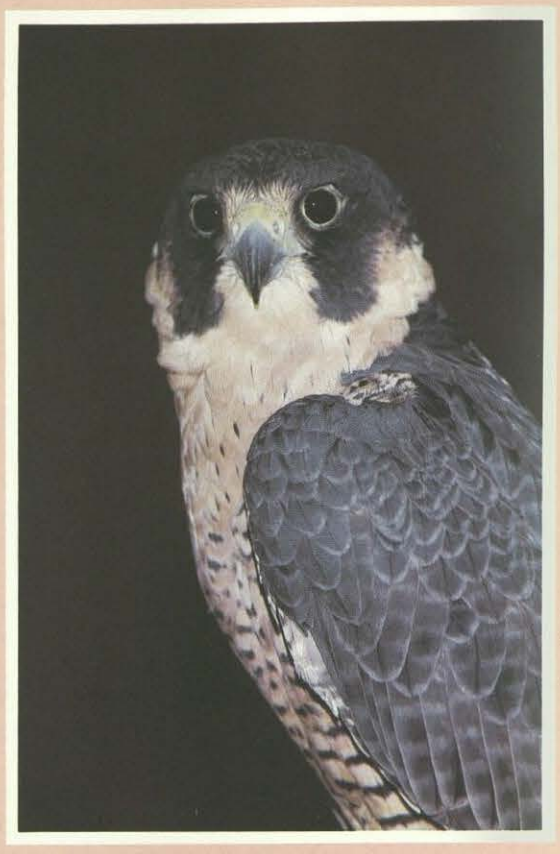
Species: Peregrine Falcon (*Falco perigrinus*)
Florida Status: Endangered

The peregrine falcon is one of our fastest, most acrobatic birds of prey and an excellent bird hunter. One of its most spectacular and awe-inspiring feats is its dive or "stoop" at speeds estimated to exceed 200 miles per hour, made during courtship or attacks on prey.

Peregrine means "wanderer or migrator." This falcon, of which 20 subspecies are known worldwide, has the most extensive natural distribution of any bird on earth. Breeding populations occur on many oceanic islands and on every continent except Antarctica. The various species range from one to more than three pounds in weight, 14 to 21 inches in length and 36 to 48 inches in wingspan.

Peregrines are medium to large falcons. In flight, the species exhibits long, pointed wings and a tear-shaped body. The head is dark and the back blue-grey. Underparts are creamy to rusty and barred with black. Their relatively large, dark, piercing eyes are offset by long black "mustache marks." Typical of all falcons, the upper mandible is notched for dispatching prey.

Immatures are brown on the back with pale feather edges, and have buff undersides streaked with brown. The feet, legs, eye ring and cere are bright yellow in adults and blue-grey in immatures. Although the plumage is similar in males (tiercels) and females, males are one-third smaller than females. Peregrines do not build nests; they lay their average clutch of three to four reddish-brown mottled eggs in a shallow scrape which they scratch in the substrate. Usually the site is a cliff ledge, but may sometimes be stick nest of another raptor or a raven. Rarely, they nest in a tree cavity or on the ground. Peregrines also nest on buildings, towers, bridges and rock quarries.



Photograph by John Waters Jr.

The peregrine's prey is comprised mainly of birds that are captured on the wing. The smaller males concentrate on song birds, shore birds, upland game birds and waterfowl up to the size of small geese. Both sexes readily take rock doves, especially in urban areas.

Peregrines are extremely vulnerable to pesticides that can concentrate in their fatty tissues. The use of DDT and DDE after World War II was the principal cause of the peregrine's decline by the early-1960s. The population east of the Mississippi River was decimated. These pesticides inhibit calcium incorporation into the eggshell, resulting in eggs having shells that are much thinner than normal. The weight of an incubating falcon can break them, and the embryos may die in the shell.

To help restore the peregrine to the United States, the Peregrine Fund was founded by Dr. Tom Cade of the University of Cornell's Department of Ornithology. The fund's first captive-bred falcons were produced in 1973 and enough young falcons had been produced by 1975 to begin releasing them to the wild. In 1980, the first ones successfully nested in the wild and a steady increase in nesting pairs occurred through 1987.

Three subspecies or races occur in North America; two of these in Florida, usually during spring and fall when they concentrate along the East Coast while migrating to the tropics. Some peregrines, mostly *anatum*, remain in Florida for the winter. During recent years a noticeable increase in sittings of not only *anatum* peregrines, but peregrines in general has occurred in south Florida.

—Brian Toland

meet Peggy Perkerson

Peggy Perkerson, a noted Tallahassee wildlife artist and illustrator, joined the Commission's FLORIDA WILDLIFE staff in August, bringing with her a genuine appreciation for wildlife and a great love for the outdoors. She is the first woman to be appointed as the magazine's art editor.

"I have wanted to work with FLORIDA WILDLIFE for years," she says, "and I am very happy to join the Commission."

Perkerson grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, but spent many childhood summer days on her grandparents' farm in Alabama. There, she experienced her first wildlife observations and received her earliest lessons about nature.

"When I was a small child, my grandfather used to tell me stories about animals in the woods." she recalls. "I learned a lot about animals and wildlife from my grandparents. My parents and grandparents also encouraged my interest in art." She has loved nature and art ever since.

When she was 13, she won her first art recognition as a winner in NBC's "Paint the Peacock" contest in Atlanta. Her interest and skills as an artist continued to grow through the years. Later, she studied art at Georgia State College (now Georgia State University). She taught art at Decatur Art Center during that time, and she later taught art at Allied Art Center in Durham, North Carolina. ▷

Humpback Whales, a limited edition hand-colored print.

Although she first learned to draw horses and other farm animals at an early age, her development in wildlife art began to become more refined in 1971. That year, the placement of some of her drawings in a Roanoke, Virginia art gallery resulted in a commission to draw circus animals and historic scenes for a circus memorabilia collector. Those drawings were also exhibited at the Ringling Museum in Sarasota, Florida.

The list of her awards, commissions, exhibits and illustrations is impressive. She has been recognized in competitions in North Carolina, Georgia and Florida, and she has received commissions from clients living as far away from Florida as Virginia and California. Perkerson's published illustrations have appeared in *Outdoors in Georgia, Wildlife in North Carolina, Animal Tracks, Sunshine Artist, Geojourney, Florida Wildlife* and other publications. She has won awards in the North Carolina Wildlife Art Exhibition and the Southeastern Wildlife Art Show, to name a few.

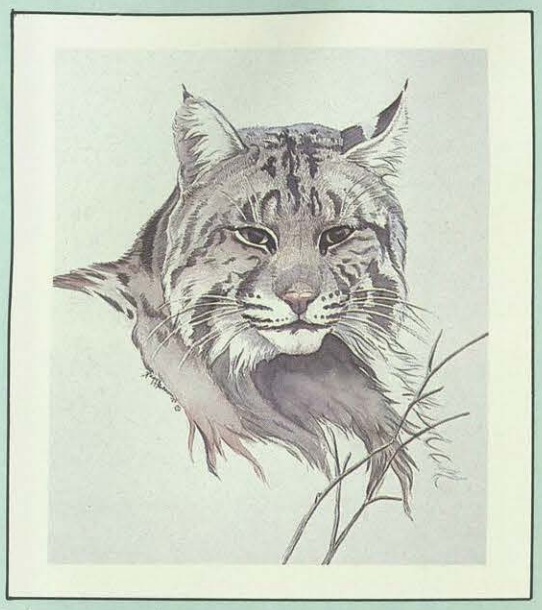
Perkerson is talented in many media, including watercolor, pen and ink, pencil, acrylics and pastels. She prefers, however, to work in a combination of media—usually watercolor with pen and ink or pencil. The variety of her subjects is wide and her works range in diversity from prints to cross-stitch patterns of wildlife.

One of the things that is very important to her work is "movement of birds and wild animals—flowing and merging with their natural environment," she explains.

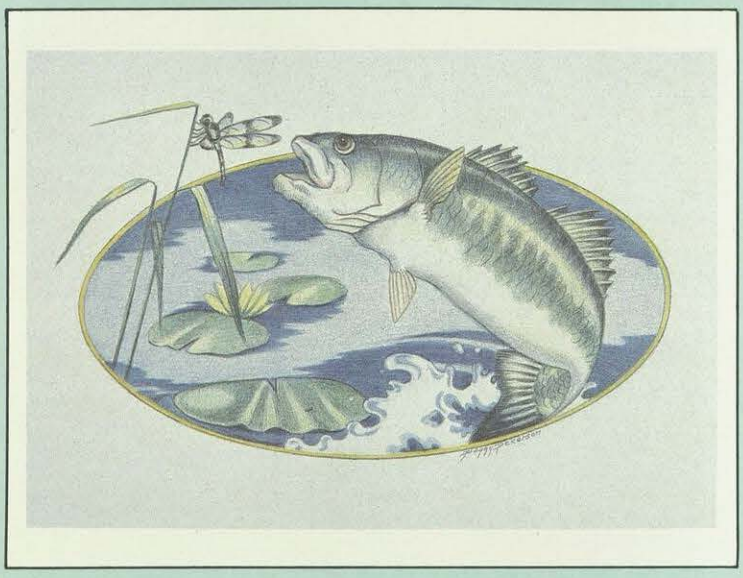
"My first aim is to produce a good piece of art," she says of her goals as an artist, "but if I also succeed in producing an effect that causes people to think about nature in a way they haven't before, I find that especially gratifying."

—John Waters Jr.

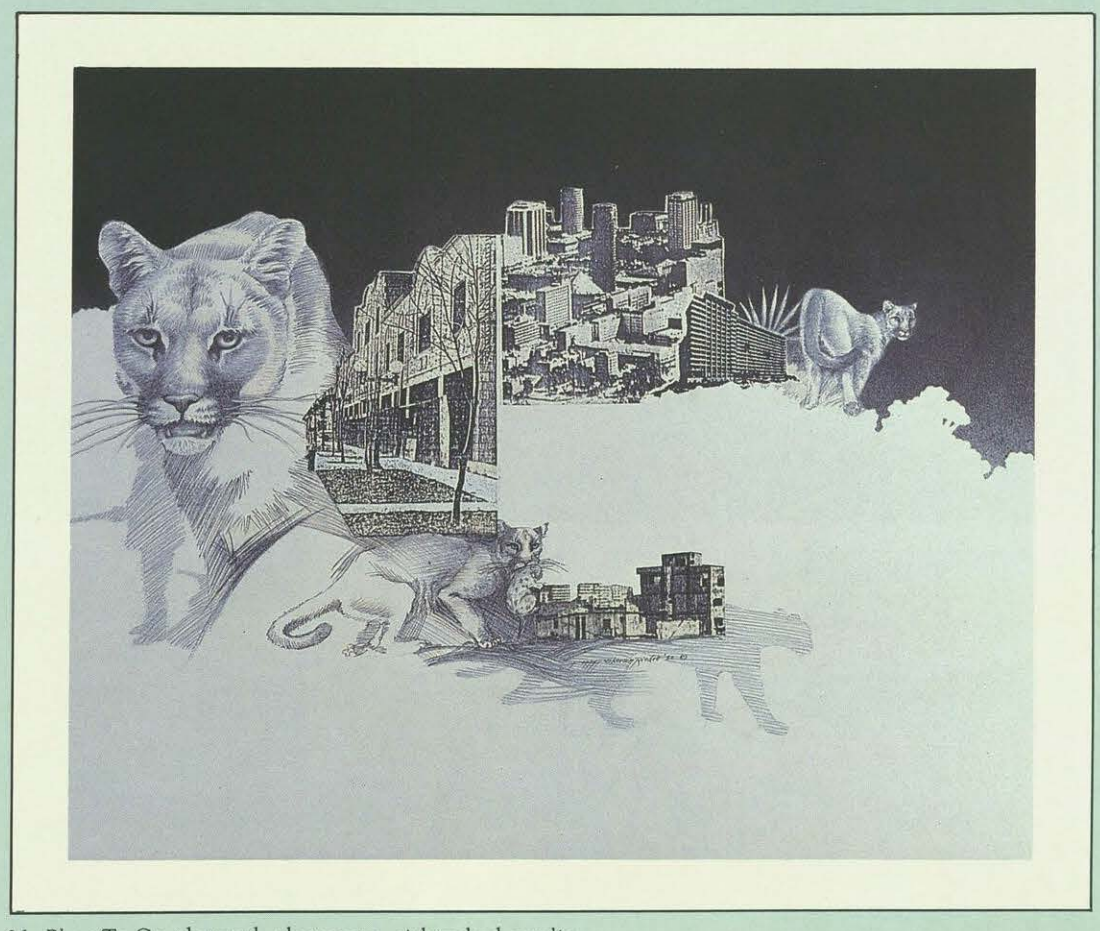
Nature Study, pen and ink with watercolor.



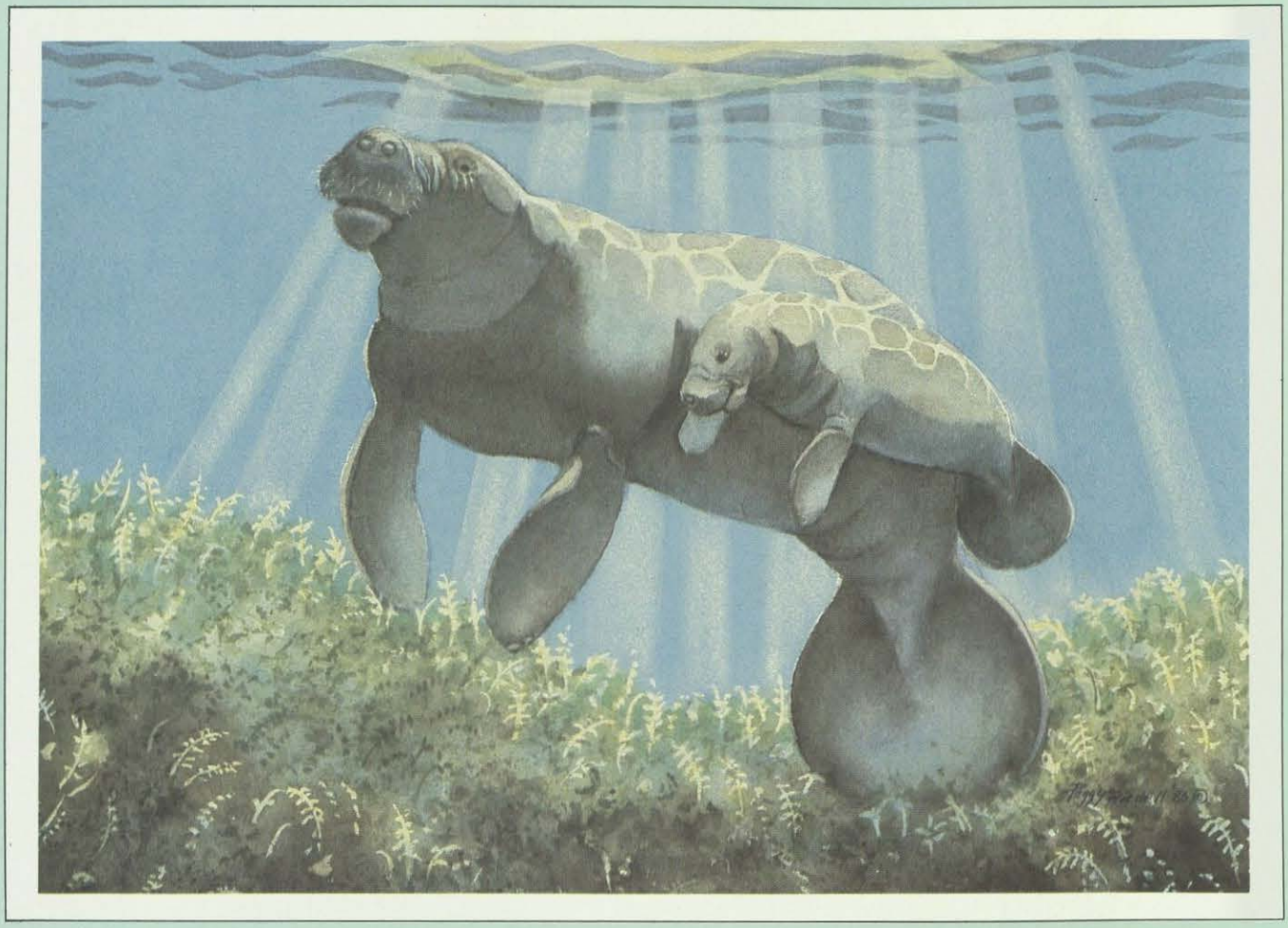
Bobcat, watercolor.



Largemouth Bass, colored pencil, design for cross-stitch pattern.



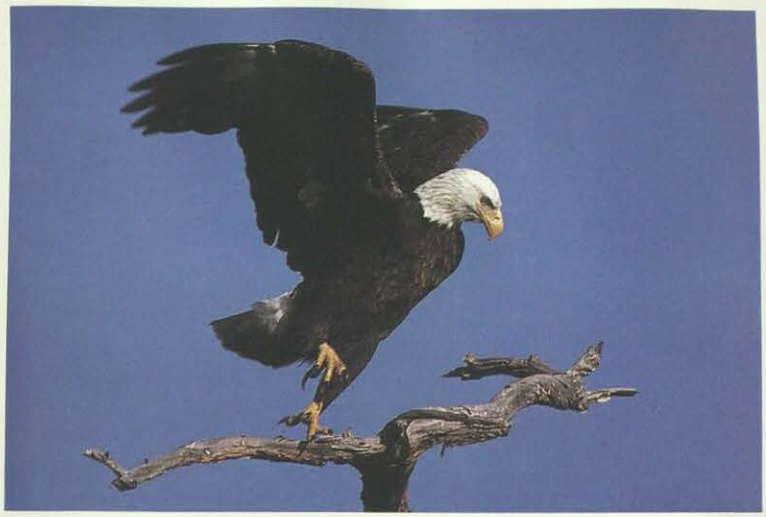
No Place To Go, charcoal, photocopy, airbrushed acrylic.



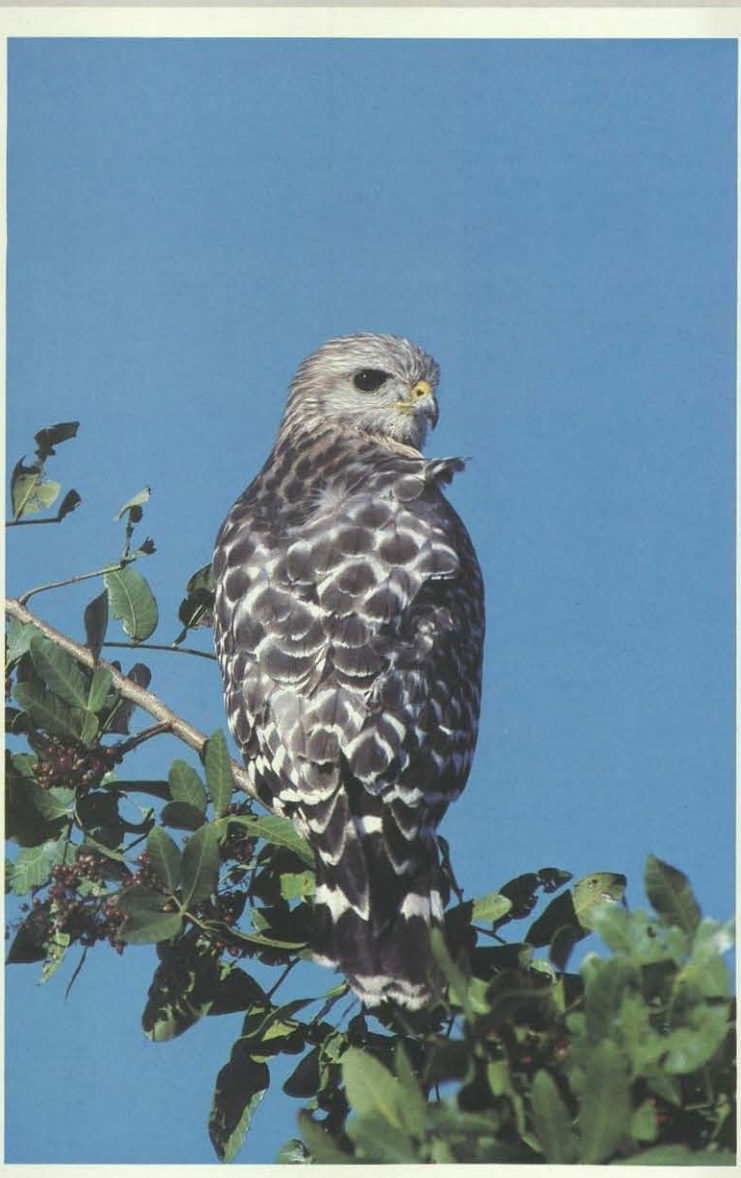
Manatee and Calf, watercolor.

Ospreys in Flight, charcoal.

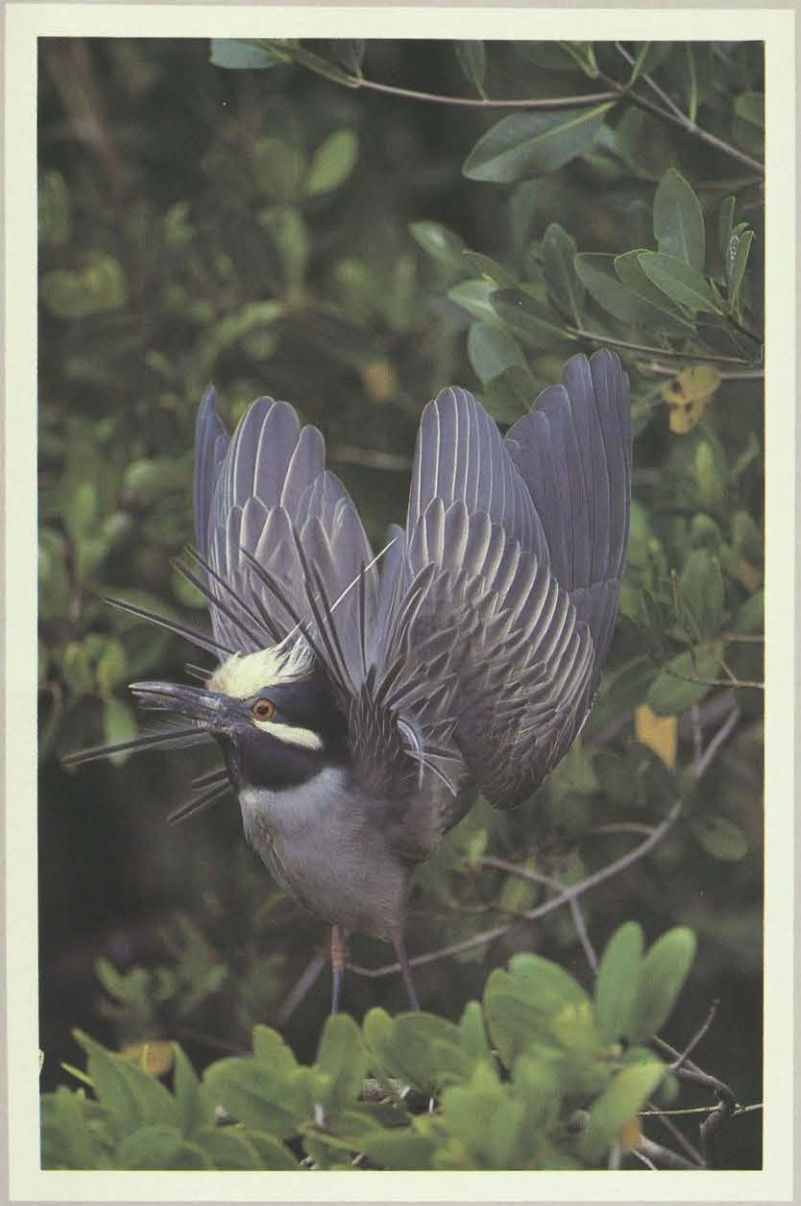
FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S Winners — CATEGORY A — Birds



FIRST PLACE:
John Flower
Englewood, Florida
Southern Bald Eagle



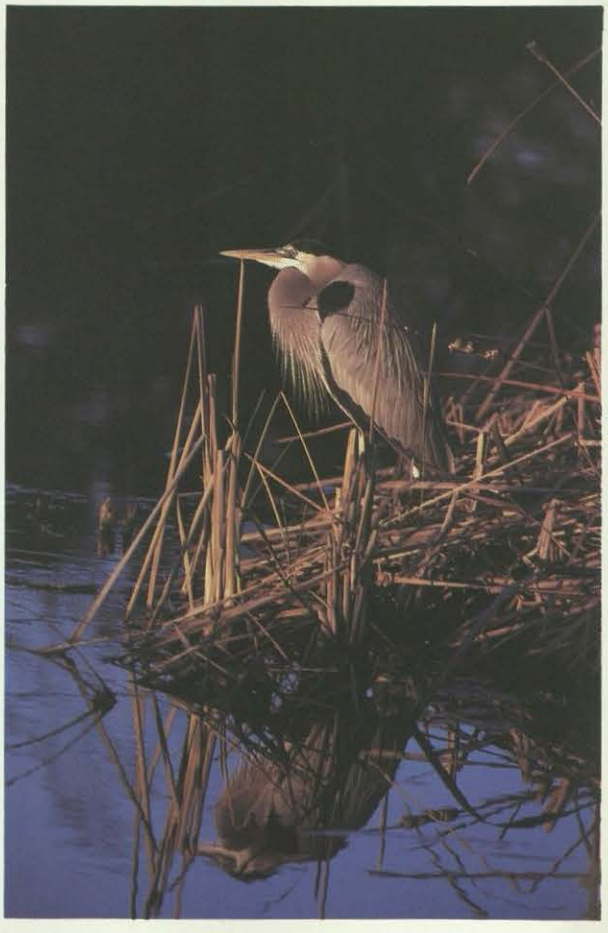
SECOND PLACE:
Henry H. Holdsworth
Jackson, Wyoming
Red-Shouldered Hawk



THIRD PLACE: Erik H. Shumway;
Sarasota, Florida; *Yellow-Crowned Night Heron*

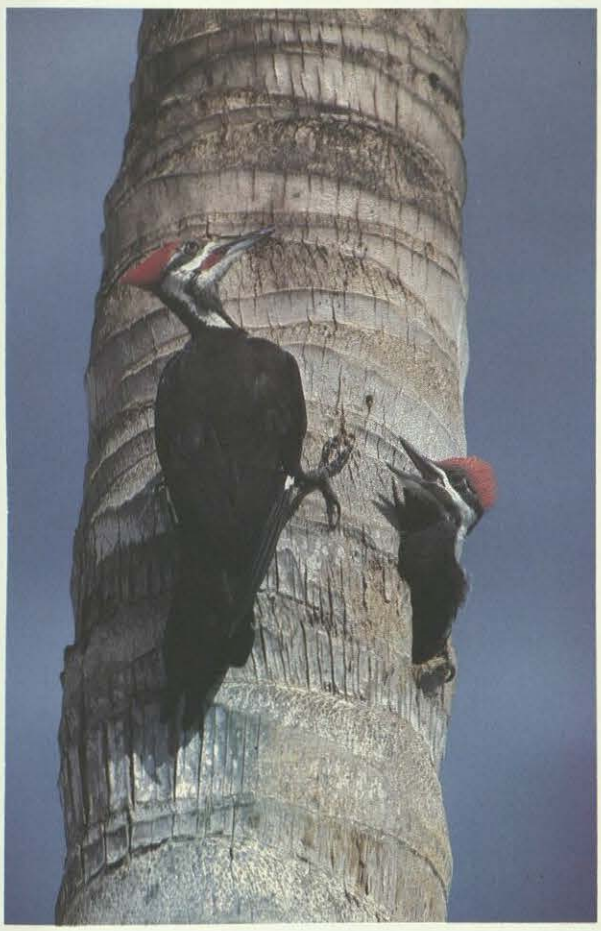
CATEGORY A *Birds*

HONORABLE MENTION: Gail Shumway; Sarasota, Florida; *Meadowlark*



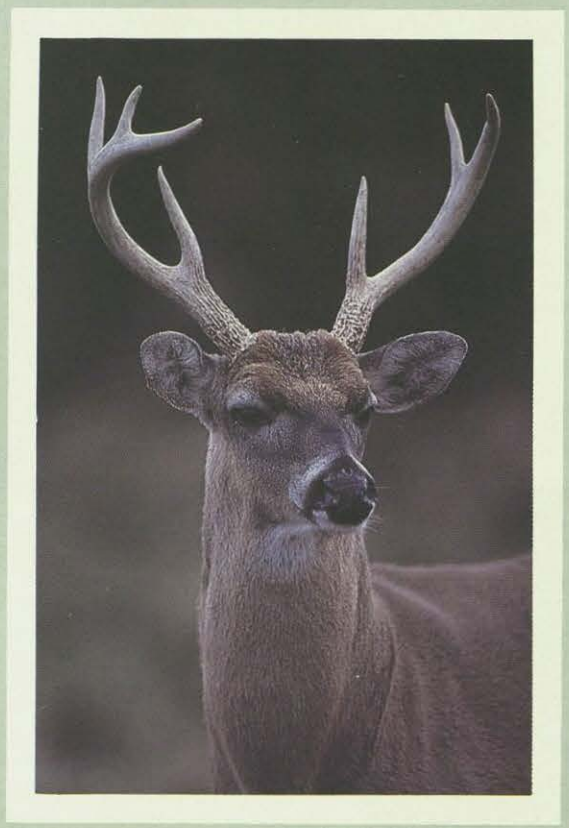
HONORABLE MENTION:
Barbara Hazard;
Daytona Beach, Florida
Great Blue Heron

HONORABLE MENTION:
John B. Blois
Jacksonville, Florida
Little Blue Heron



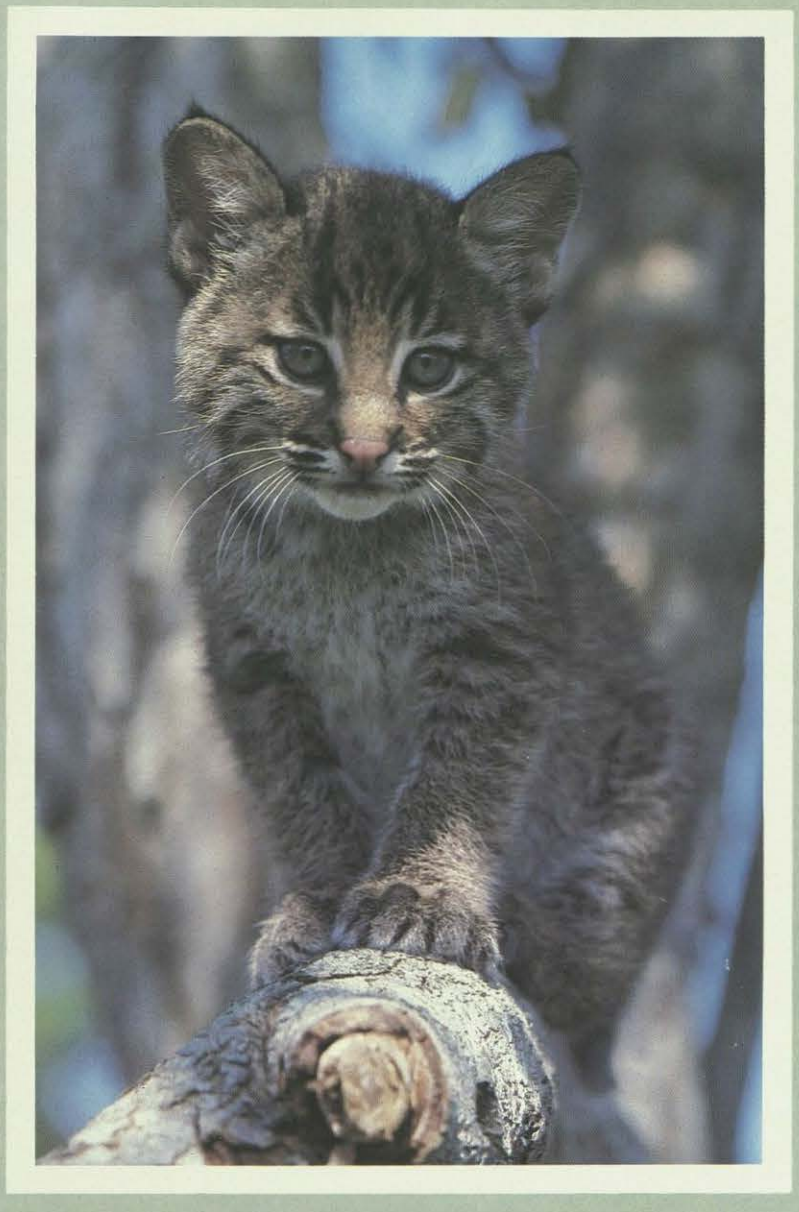
HONORABLE MENTION:
Gail Shumway
Sarasota, Florida
Pileated Woodpeckers

FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S *Winners* — CATEGORY B *Mammals*



FIRST PLACE: John Flower
Englewood, Florida
White-Tailed Deer

Hundreds of beautiful color slides of Florida's birds and mammals were received in our 1987 annual natural photography contest, and the ones shown here were judged to be the winners. John Flower of Englewood, Florida, won First Place in both categories, and his winning images were selected for this issue's covers. His excellent picture of a bobcat kitten also caught the judges' eyes and won Second Place in the mammals category. Henry Holdsworth of Jackson, Wyoming and Gail Shumway of Sarasota, Florida also won two recognitions each.

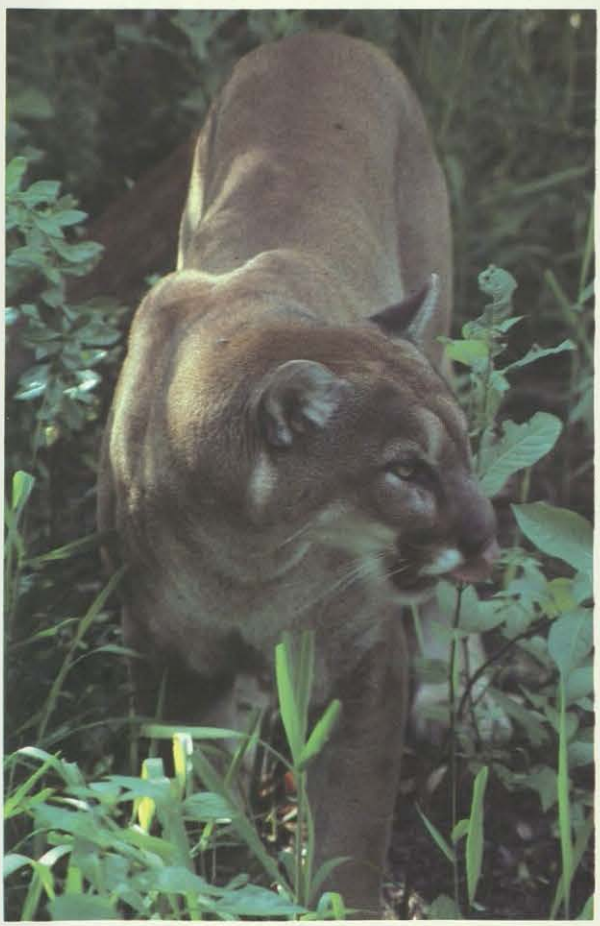


SECOND PLACE: John Flower
Englewood, Florida; *Bobcat Kitten*

CATEGORY B *Mammals*

THIRD PLACE: Patrica Hanbery;
Bradenton, Florida
Juvenile Cottontail Rabbit

HONORABLE MENTION:
Henry H. Holdsworth
Jackson, Wyoming
Armadillo



HONORABLE MENTION:
Beverly Bryan
Tallahassee, Florida
Panther

Managing For White-tails

By Perry Oldenburg

White-tailed deer are among the most successful wildlife management stories in Florida's conservation history. The story began in the 1930s, at a time when uncontrolled hunting had decimated the Florida deer population to only an estimated 20,000 animals. Since that time, better regulation of hunting, a relative lack of predation on the herd and scientific habitat management have increased Florida's deer population today to an estimated 700,000 animals.

But before we rest on our laurels, let's consider a few more facts: Each year more than a quarter-million new people are coming to Florida, and each of them needs a place to live. In addition, they need retail stores, schools, new roads, parking lots, more hospitals, sewage treatment facilities, parks, churches and everything else that goes with urbanization.

All these things use Florida's major resource—land, and urbanization is incompatible with deer. So what's good and necessary for people isn't so good for white-tailed deer.

Deer habitat is being lost daily in Florida. If the public is going to continue to have an adequate population of white-tailed deer to hunt, observe, photograph and, less commonly, to provide prey for the shrinking Florida panther population, management of deer habitat will need to be even better than in the past.

Since forestlands and adjacent agricultural lands are the primary habitat type for the white-tail in Florida, these are the areas in which management efforts need to be concentrated. If managed scientifically, pine plantations and piney flatwoods can also provide quality habitat for white-tailed deer; however, regular, prescribed burns are essential to maintain quality deer habitat in pine plantations and flatwoods.

Generally, pine plantations and flatwoods should be prescribe burned every two to four years. Prescribed burning stimulates growth of herbaceous plants on which deer browse and fire helps keep woody vegetation at a height which deer can browse. Burning also helps encourage the growth of the right kind of escape cover for adult deer and fawns—neither too dense nor too sparse. In addition, burning recycles nutrients that are contained in inedible woody plants and other organic debris.

Regular burning prevents the build-up of excessive fuel loads which, when they burn, can result in hotter fires which may damage pine trees. Burns are generally hotter in summer than winter. Both runner oak and low-bush blueberries produce much more mast, upon which deer feed, when burned during July or August. If you own land and want recommendations for prescribed burning, contact a Commission regional wildlife biologist and a county forester from the Division of Forestry.

As a pine stand matures, plants upon which deer browse are shaded out—unless the stand is thinned. Wider spacing of pine plantings (8' x 10' or 7' x 11') and thinning of dense stands enhances browse production by delaying the closure of the canopy formed by pines. Pine stands that are managed on a longer, saw-timber rotation (40 to 70 years) should be thinned at eight- to 10-year intervals to enhance browse production.

A mixture of pines of different ages better provides the foraging requirements for white-tailed deer than does a single, large, even-aged pine plantation. This is so because more kinds of deer foods grow where the trees vary in size and vegetative density. An advantage to deer is that they do not have to travel as far to find an adequate, varied diet in the mixed-age habitat.

Forests and flatwoods can be managed so that as older, denser stands shade out the browse plants, newly-thinned plantations and clear-cuts can provide a new source of forage.

Cypress and mixed-hardwood swamps, which are often scattered throughout Florida's pine plantations and flatwoods, are heavily used by white-tailed deer. These habitats are excellent sources of woody-plant browse and they provide stable escape cover and bedding sites. These are particularly important when the surrounding pine forests are clear cut.

A band of uncut timber surrounding a swamp enhances the swamp's value to deer. Mature hardwood trees and shrubs within swamps also provide a good source of hard and soft mast (acorns, gallberries, palmetto berries and tupelo fruits) which are important components in the white-tailed deer diet, particularly in fall and winter. The high energy and protein available from mast is critical to doe reproductive success and for fawn survival during spring and summer. Patches of oaks and other hardwoods and shrubs scattered through a pine plantation can also provide an important mast crop. Because of this, application of herbicides to mature, mast-producing trees should be avoided if forestland is being managed for deer and other wildlife.

Buffer areas along streams (streamside management zones) should be left undisturbed when timber is harvested because hardwoods within these zones produce important mast crops and browse. The diversity of mast-producing trees and rich soils of typical stream bottomlands make these areas exceptionally good deer

PHOTOGRAPH BY T. MURDOCK

White-tailed deer management in Florida will need to be even better in the future. Human demand for use of the same habitats white-tails prefer directly competes with this species.

habitats. Mast-producing tree diversity is important because different tree species bear their mast crops at different times of the year and some tree species do not produce mast every year. Therefore, a greater diversity of trees will produce a more steady supply of mast for deer to forage upon.

Streamside management zones also provide a stable cover area when a surrounding pine plantation is clear cut. In addition, summer browse provided by these areas is important to fawn growth and buck antler development.

Florida's pine-oak uplands support good populations of deer. The key to maintaining quality deer habitat in pine-oak uplands is to retain and promote mast-producing oak trees. These oaks can also provide extremely valuable deer forage. In Florida, however, pine-oak uplands are rapidly being converted to pine monocultures through north and central Florida, and thickly planted pines shade out the important oak trees and other shrubs. To avoid this, land managers can leave all mast-producing trees (oaks) and space out planted pines so as not to shade out mast-producing trees. Pine-oak uplands should be maintained as a habitat type, not converted to pine plantations.

Pine-oak uplands on sandy soils require a different prescribed burn schedule than pine plantations and flatwoods. Sandy, forested uplands generally accumulate fuel (litter) more slowly than flatwoods and thus should be burned approximately every three or four years. Burning at shorter or longer intervals may damage and destroy mast-producing trees.

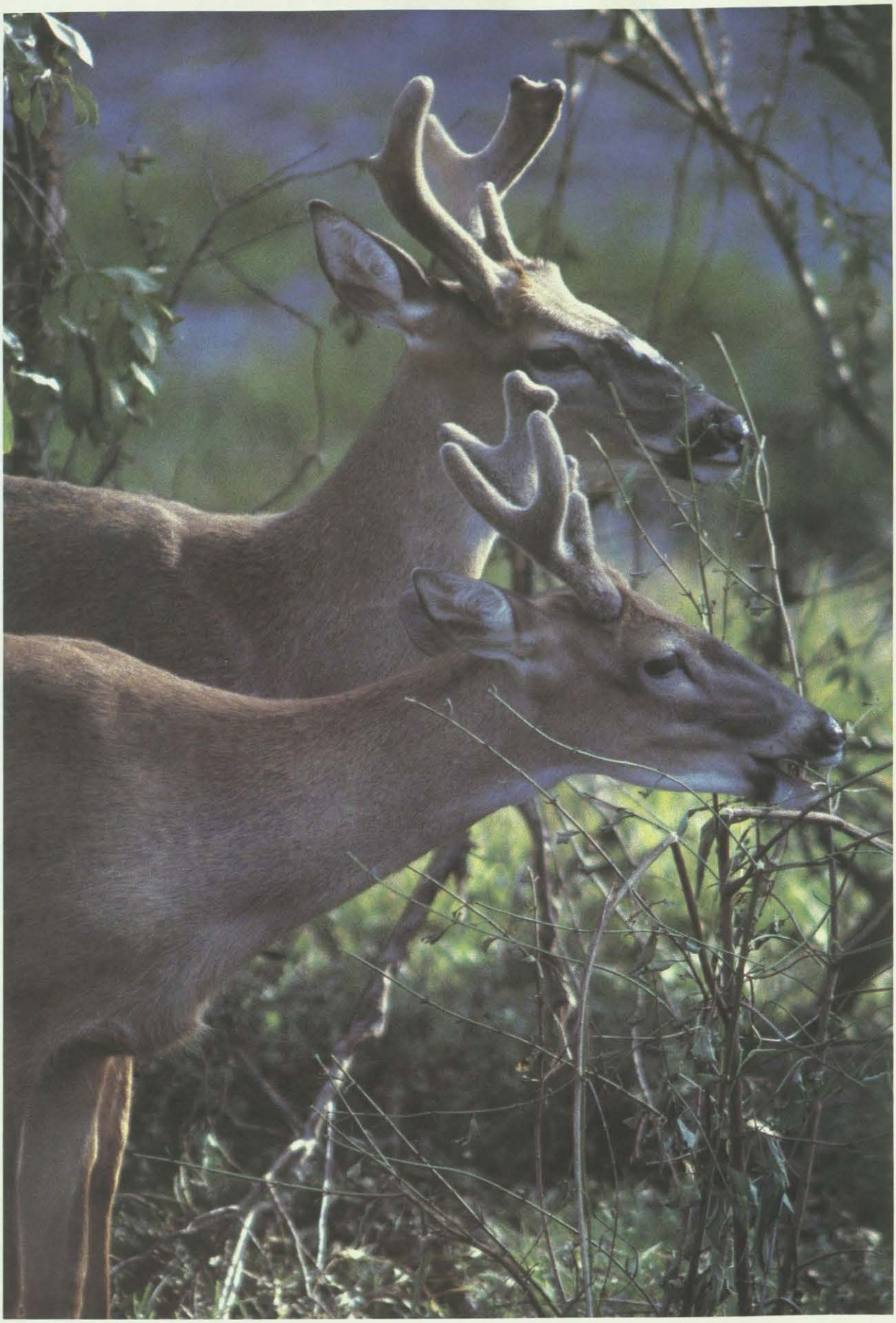
Hardwood hammocks near to or interspersed with pine plantations greatly enhance the value of an area for white-tailed deer. These hammocks produce mast (in the fall and winter) and browse (in the form of forbs and woody plants) throughout the rest of the year.

If mature mast-producing trees are uncommon in a forested area that is to be managed for deer, it is a wise practice to avoid cutting timber within the hammocks. Areas of extensive hardwood hammocks can be selectively timbered and still provide very good deer forage if care is taken to leave mature, mast-producing trees. Generally, at least 10 mature mast-producing trees per acre should be left when harvesting within hammocks. If forestland is to be managed for forest products, deer and other wildlife, hardwood hammocks should not be converted to pine plantations.

Carefully managed, low-intensity grazing by cattle on forestland can actually enhance forage production for deer. However, overgrazing will reduce available forage and the cattle will compete with deer for that which remains. Land managers who wish to manage their forest for both cattle and deer can consult with their county extension agent, local soil conservation agent or regional wildlife biologist for assistance.

Finally, a word about planting food plots for white-tailed deer: traditional food plot plantings (such as rye, oats and wheat) provide a seasonal source of browse for deer. Plots may have some importance if surrounding pine plantations have a closed canopy, but if clearcuts or young pines (1 to 7 years old) are nearby, food plots are unnecessary.

An alternative measure, which will supply higher quality deer forage, and which requires less maintenance, is to plant patches of oaks or other mast-producing hardwoods within and around pine plantations. Since mast production ▷



PHOTOGRAPH BY T. MURDOCK

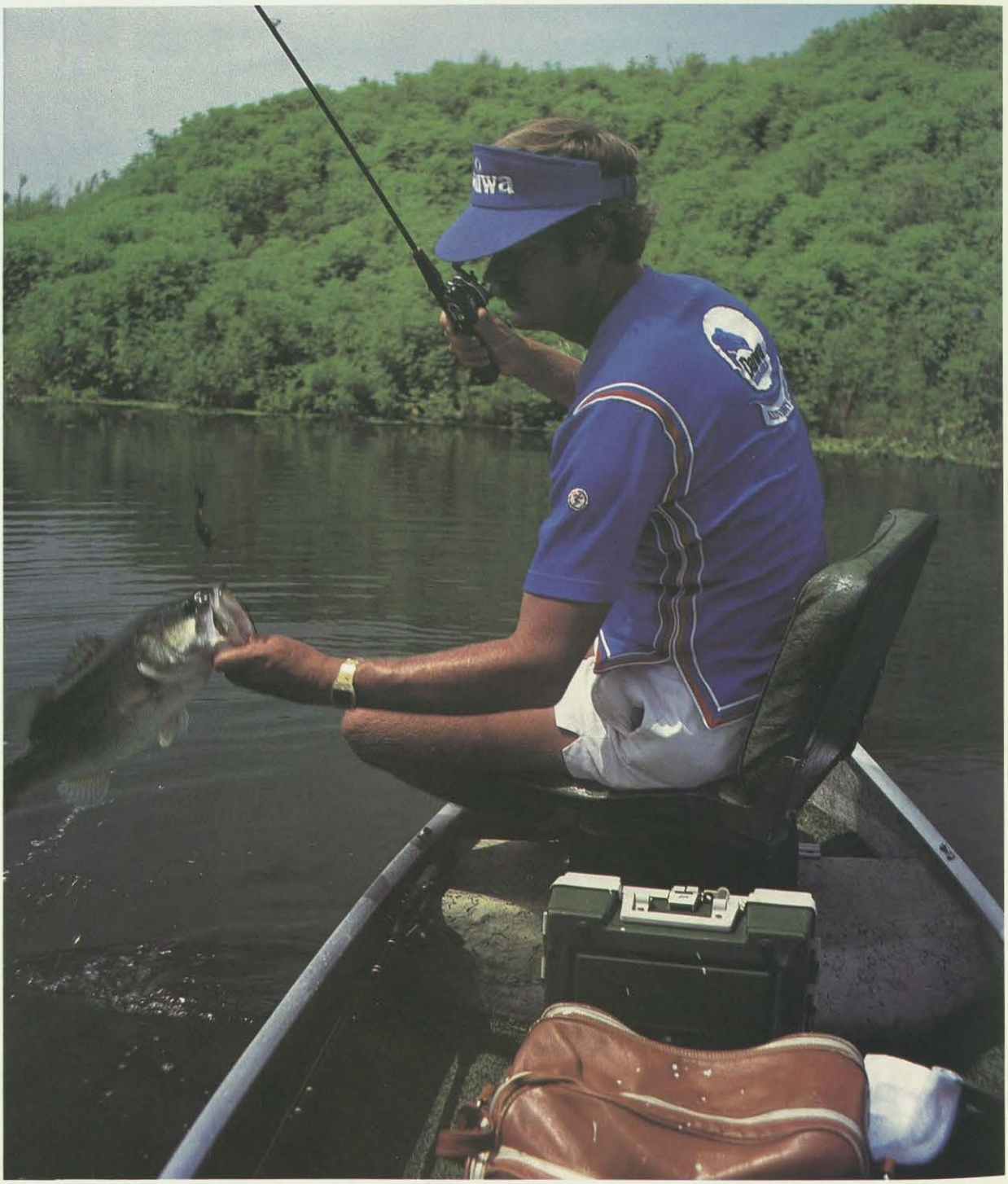
SOIL CONDITIONS	FLORIDA REGION	HARDWOOD SPECIES
Sandy, well-drained	North	Sand-oak
Sandy, well-drained	North	Sand-post oak
Sandy, well-drained	Throughout	Turkey oak
Sandy, well-drained	North, Central	Blackjack oak
Sandy, well-drained	South, Central	Myrtle oak
Sandy, well-drained	North	Bluejack oak
Sandy, well-drained	North, Central	Chapman oak
Well-drained	North	White oak
Well-drained	North	Bluff oak
Well-drained to moderately drained	Throughout	Live oak
Upland fertile	North	Southern red oak
Wide variety of conditions	North, Central	Laurel oak
Wide variety of conditions	Throughout	Water oak
Clay or marl	North	Post oak
Poorly drained	North	Willow oak
Bottomland	North	Swamp oak, chestnut oak
Bottomland	North	Overcup oak

varies yearly and seasonally with the different species of hardwoods, we recommend planting a variety of oak species, depending on the soil characteristics of the site.

If the white-tailed deer on a tract of land are being managed for hunting, the land manager can manage the deer population for that objective. Objectives may be defined by considering whether or not hunters want "trophy class" bucks or the maximum number of deer regardless of size or sex. Other considerations include maximizing the number of days of deer hunting, or perhaps increasing the opportunity to see many deer but only take a few. Once these objectives are established, the manager can consult one of the Commission's regional wildlife biologists, who can help develop the best harvest and management strategies for a particular piece of land

EXPLORING NEW WATERS FOR BASS

By Larry Larsen



PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY LARSEN

Many anglers have a favorite river or lake where they prefer to fish, but often they don't know about other good places. Once familiar with one bass hole, some anglers won't fish anywhere else. This can, of course, be detrimental to their fishing success. The possibility of not catching anything is well worth the challenges and rewards of exploring new bass haunts. And in Florida, there are many overlooked bassing waters just waiting to be fished by someone new.

South Florida Canals

Drive down a major highway or rural road in south Florida, and you're bound to cross over or parallel a canal. These man-made freshwater channels frequently offer great opportunities to find bass—and lots of them.

Larry Lazoen has fished and guided on some of southwest Florida's most productive canals for many years. For variety and angling success, says this veteran fisherman, canals are hard to beat.

"It's easy to work a canal," Lazoen admits. "You just launch your boat and keep it in the center of the canal while you fish.

"Most canals are reasonably narrow," he continues, "and only medium-distance casts at 45 degrees to the shoreline are needed."

Lazoen, a Port Charlotte, Florida resident, often fishes in the 25 miles of open canals that run through the Gardens of South Cove area. That's 50 miles of shoreline! Trout, snook and redfish inhabit the same waters as trophy-size largemouth bass, and largemouths of all sizes are numerous along the weedy edges.

When searching for optimal fishing waters, Lazoen prefers canals that are not "overpopulated with houses and people along their banks." Rural southwest Florida canals that have heavy shoreline cover, such as pencil reeds, cattails and bulrushes, are his favorite spots to fish.

"You have to watch the canals from season to season to determine the better ones," Lazoen explains. "Some of them get completely choked over with hyacinths, and that often kills the fishing for a while. I find those which have open water year-round are the best ones."

Most Florida canals run to a maximum of 10 to 12 feet deep, with an average depth of six feet. Any that are at least three feet deep, however, offer fishing opportunity. Some are silted, especially at points where smaller canals or ditches enter them.

"If the water has any kind of flow at all, and it's clear, then the fishing will usually be good," Lazoen points out. "Most of the better canal waters in southwest Florida are dark or tea-colored, but if you can see the foot of your trolling motor, you're in water that's clear enough to fish."

Canals having visibilities up to five feet are also excellent producers, but catching fish in these waters can be tough for some anglers. Long casts with topwater plugs—fished early or late in the day—are often successful. Lazoen's exceptional success at canal fishing with artificial lures has included a day when he accumulated seven bass that weighed 28 pounds, and another day when he landed a lunker largemouth just three ounces short of 10 pounds.

"Most anglers don't realize there are a lot of bass in the three- to five-pound range in some canals," says Lazoen. "Most of these canals have been in existence for at least 25 years, so they are mature enough to grow huge fish."

In April, May and June, before the usual rainy season begins, those canals that are choked with hyacinths won't be as good as the open ones for fishing with artificial lures. However, anglers who use live shiners for bait may well find prime bassing conditions in the hyacinths, as well as enjoy trying out their fishing skills.

"When the hyacinths start to raft up," says Lazoen, "shiner fishing under the floating cover often produces some big fish.

"Certainly on any evening or morning you stand a chance of catching a seven-pounder. Many shiner fishermen catch bass up to 14 pounds in the waterways.

"The key is finding those canals that don't get choked over," he adds. "If they do, everything under them dies and other vegetation and grasses disappear. Then when the rains come and flush out the rotted vegetation, it usually takes a while for bass to re-establish in those canals."

He recommends topwater lures as the best overall bait choice to attract largemouths. He uses a two-inch chrome plug that matches the small size of the bass forage frequently living in the canals. Many canals in south Florida don't contain forage in either large quantities or great size. A shiner population is often present, but generally, threadfin shad and gizzard shad are not found. The primary prey fish in many of these canals are tiny guppy and molly-type minnows.

Minnow-foraging largemouth bass, according to Lazoen, are fooled by small topwater plugs that closely resemble guppies or mollies. He frequently fishes his small plugs on 12-pound-test monofilament line, but in canals which have heavy cover, he'll toss spoons or buzz-baits on 17- or 20-pound-test line. Plastic worm fare offered by Lazoen usually warrants 14-pound monofilament.

Lazoen has definite personal choices of lure color for fishing in canal waters. He prefers a chrome topwater bait and, sometimes, a baby bass pattern floating plug. If he fishes with an injured-minnow type of plug, he opts for gold and black-back or silver and black-back. Lazoen stays with black/grape shades of plastic worms when fishing most Florida canals.

He also has some favorite places to fish, one of which is Nine-Mile Canal, near Port Charlotte. It is among the area's miles of canals that have virtually no fishing pressure. Another canal, Morningstar Waterway, is also an excellent place to catch fish, Lazoen says. There are many houses and docks right on the canal, yet, like many others, it's an overlooked waterway. ▷

Rodman Reservoir

This U.S. Army Corps of Engineers impoundment was the subject of much concern when a significant fish kill occurred there in the spring of 1986. Among the suspected causes were agricultural chemical runoff upstream and higher silt levels caused by heavy rains at the time. The result was that the dissolved oxygen level in the lake was almost zero.

Although numerous articles in newspapers and magazines convinced many anglers that fishing at Rodman was ruined, at least temporarily, Shaw Grigsby, a professional tournament angler, says, "Not so!

"Everyone quit fishing the lake when the news hit, but what's amazing is that ever since then, Rodman fishing has been fantastic. That showed me what a high population of fish live in that reservoir!"

Grisgby, who lives in Gainesville, frequently fishes Rodman for fun and tournament practice. He observed a friend win a tournament while fishing in Rodman, about three weeks after the fish kill.

Grigsby's favorite areas in Rodman lie between the Kenwood and Orange Springs landings in the center section of Lake Oklawaha. There is more diverse cover and bottom structure in that area, he says, and one of the largest concentrations of fish.

"You have everything from standing timber to hydrilla mats, old creek channels, the major Oklawaha River channel and flats," says Grigsby. "Farther upstream, you only have the Orange Springs flats and then, just river. As you go down toward the dam, you enter a wide-base reservoir."

Grisby prefers topwater baits when fishing Rodman. "If you are throwing a topwater bait, you won't be going wrong most of the year," he says.

He usually tosses either injured-minnow type lures, buzz-baits or Tiny Torpedoes. Most of his fish have come from either a shallow or mid-depth range. A favorite crank-bait spot where Grigsby likes to fish lies just out from the dam, where the old Oklawaha River channel makes a bend. Large, deep-running crank-baits have been very productive for him there. Occasionally, he'll switch to a vibrating plug like a Rattletrap.

Water temperature is important to Grigsby, as it gives him an idea of what the fish should be doing at that particular time or season. Although Florida has relatively mild winters, Rodman has the additional advantage of having several natural springs and artesian wells which flow into it.

"The water temperature is pretty consistent in some areas," he points out. "Those places will produce bass on topwater baits, even in the coldest winter."

Grigsby's largest bass from Rodman weighed 11-3/4 pounds and was caught on a buzz-bait. He has also caught big bass by flipping worms in the water lettuce and in the old river channel where the mats of vegetation extend out into the channel. Most of his fish are hooked in seven to eight feet of water.

"Rodman is not a typical Florida water," says Grigsby. "There's a variety of structure and depth. There's vegetated areas and shallow flats fishing, if you want to do that. Then you also have northern-type reservoir fishing, with submerged stumps and timber, creek channels, dropoffs, humps and banks. It just has everything you could want!"

PHOTOGRAPH BY LARRY LARSEN

Apalachicola River Backwaters

Shag Shahid, a fishing tackle representative who lives in Alabama, has fished the Apalachicola River watershed for 27 years. He says he is one of the few bass anglers the river ever experiences. Perhaps because of its remote location and its brackish waters, the Apalachicola River continues to be an often overlooked bass fishery.

"The fun of the game is getting to where other people can't fish," said Shahid with a smile as he was motoring over a two-foot-diameter log. His outboard kicked up as we slid over the log, which had ended up in the water after a tornado blew the tree down a few years before.

"I stayed right here for three hours one time, trying to get my boat off a tree stump," he told me.

Most of the cuts and creeks twisting and turning through the river bay flats have visible obstructions at low tide, but they can be skirted or passed over when the tide is high. Around October, the creeks are full of migrating shrimp—and the largemouth follow the forage.

"As long as you can fish them every week, you can follow those fish and stay right on top of them, Shahid explains. "You can have a good catch about every week."

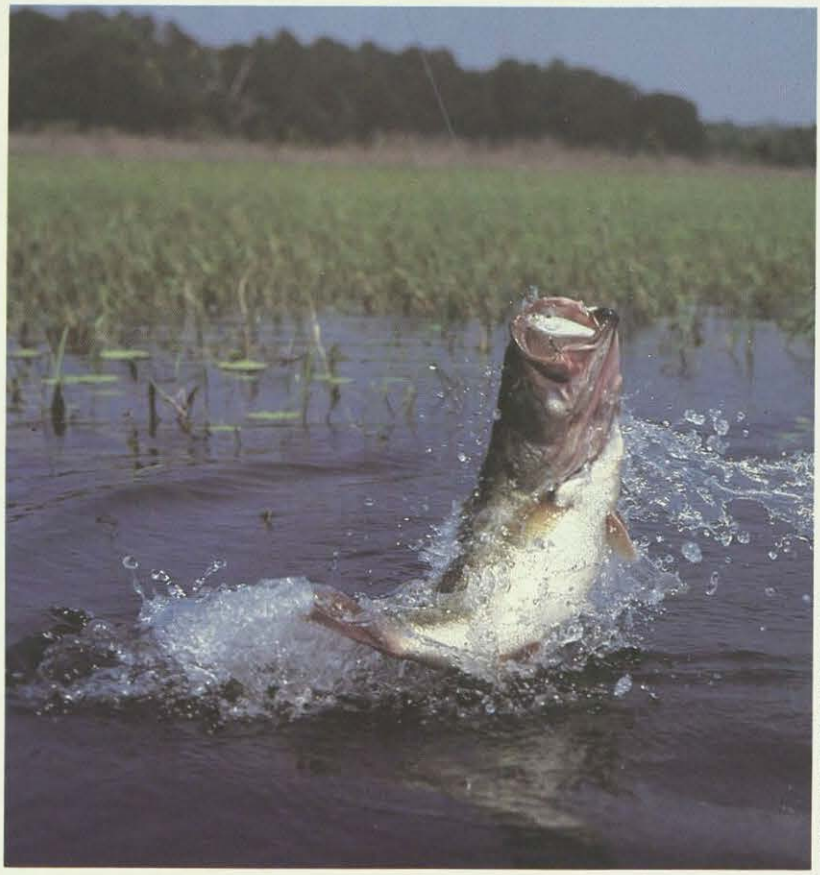
Finding the best areas to fish, however, depends on the time of the year and the tidal influence. "You have to watch the tides at the mouth of the river," he notes. "When you have two tides, that's an excellent condition. The water movement is in twice and out twice. When the water is moving, the dissolved oxygen is higher and you catch more fish," he claims. "But, some days there is only one tide.

"A steady wind usually blows over the bay all day long, and when it does, the water tends to be very turbulent," he adds. "That's tough on some fishermen because many don't know how to handle turbulent water, but I love it".

Turbulence and tidal currents make the water dingy and this helps the bass fishing, according to Shahid. It's usually clear around the mouth of the watershed, however, unless a bad storm has recently passed through.

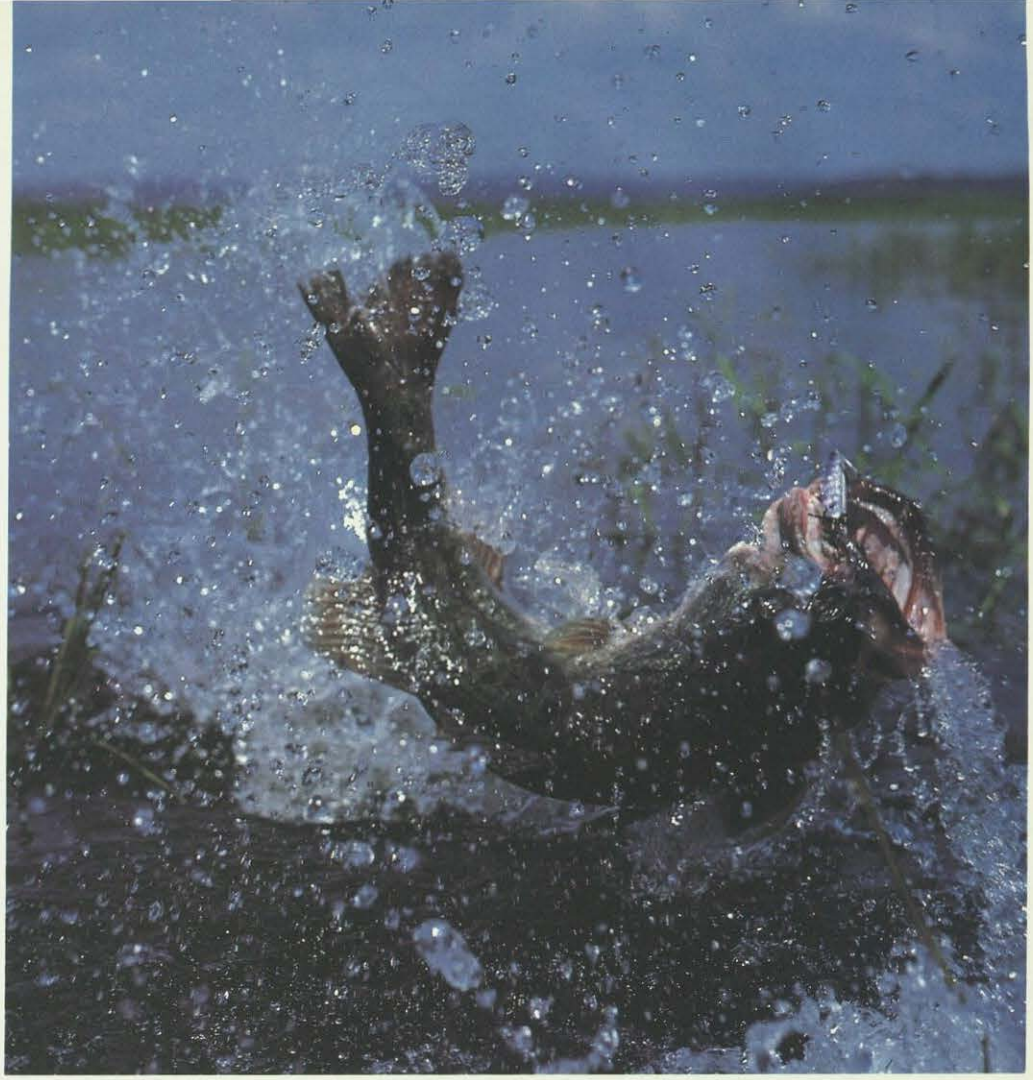
Shahid prefers big, deep-running crank-baits. He feels these are most productive for big fish in the fall. He's caught many weighing over seven pounds on these plugs. Other productive baits include spinner-baits and the ever-faithful plastic worm.

No matter where you are in Florida, there are relatively unknown and seldom fished waters just waiting for you to try them. With the diversity of water types in this state, you can choose among canals, lakes, ponds, reservoirs, rivers and smaller streams. The rewards of testing your skills in areas where you have not previously fished—and the chances of catching a lunker—can be great.



The thrill of catching a Florida fighting bass is one that all anglers will remember. When fishing in new waters, it can be even more exciting.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN PROCTOR



PHOTOGRAPH BY BRIAN PROCTOR

Getting Wet For BIGMOUTHS

By Bob McNally

When largemouth bass are in the shallows, wading is the way to go.

It was the kind of weedy, pad-filled lake (unique to Florida) that fairly reeked of largemouth bass. Massive lakeside cypress trees adorned with Spanish moss appeared phantom-like in the gray light of dawn. There were stubby cypress knees protruding up through the stained water. Grass beds and reed clumps peppered the shallows.

As friend Jay Comstock and I slowly waded the small lake, we flipped plastic worms and topwater lures near the "bassy-looking" shoreline. The lake was as flat as a billiard table; not the slightest breeze rustled the treetop moss. Soon, a fiery sun rose in the east, its rays bouncing crimson chips off the water's surface.

Jay cast a surface plug beside a gnarled stump. He popped it once and a 4-pound bigmouth catapulted out of the water. It arched high in the air, its sides shimmering in the new-day light, and landed on the lure with a resounding splash. As the bass darted away from the stump in front of us, and jumped, its gills flared wide and its head rocked from side to side. It landed with a "*SPLAATTT*," then immediately leaped again, this time within arm's reach of my friend. In mid-jump the bigmouth shook its head and tossed the lure free.

"Man! What a fish!" shouted Jay. "There's nothin' like wadin' for bass."

We continued fishing that morning and caught a few bass and

lost a few others. But there is a lot more to angling than the mere catching of fish. There are sights and sounds, too, that make wading for largemouths what it is. The peaceful silence way out there on the lake, with no boats, motors or people nearby, seemed unreal in this era of crowded fishing spots. It was broken only occasionally by the squeal of an osprey and the raucous calling of gulls wheeling overhead. And a wedge of egrets that came low over the cypress trees out of the east were etched in silhouette against the morning sun.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB McNALLY

Scenes such as that are a large part of what wading for Florida bass is all about. But more importantly, wading is a very effective method of catching Sunshine State bigmouths. Most anglers mistakenly believe wading is strictly a spring fling for bass. While there's no doubt early-season action is great for wading anglers, summer and fall wade-fishing is at least equally good, and certainly more consistent.

If I have my choice, I prefer wading for bass over any other shallow-water angling method—from spring through fall. Furthermore, I think that under the right conditions on most bass waters, an experienced wader can outfish boat and shoreline anglers.

There are many reasons why wading for bass is so productive. For one, a wader can work a likely area completely—much more thoroughly than boat or bank anglers. Bank fishermen are limited in their approach to many prime bigmouth areas, and boat anglers are at a disadvantage when working shallow water because they frequently spook fish with boat noises. Too, fishermen in a boat have a higher profile above the water surface than do waders because boat anglers are more readily visible to bass lying in clear water.

Boats, however, can be a valuable aid to wading bass anglers by providing greater mobility to lake and river areas which are seldom wade-fished. Fact is, most of the best wading anglers I know use boats much of the time to get to their favorite bassing locations. Once they've reached the place, they either beach or anchor the boat, then wade; or they tie the skiff to their waist and tow it.

Some bass anglers tow small rubber rafts or child-size plastic boats while they're fishing. In the rafts or lightweight toy boats they place extra lures, rods and reels, small coolers with iced drinks and other accessory gear that may be needed during a long day of bass wading. Rafts and little boats can be easily transported to prime wading waters via car or boat, and they're very inexpensive.

Wading enables anglers to work many shallow, "marshy" Florida waters that are remote and rarely fished, but which frequently hold good numbers of big largemouths. Small waters that wouldn't rate a second glance in other parts of America often are jammed with heavyweight bigmouths in Florida.

Such neglected lakes, ponds and streams can offer fast action, and anglers who do much wading invariably locate some of these secluded hot spots. For example, I remember an August day of bassing with Robert Jean and Jerry Morrow, of Jacksonville, at a small north Florida lake. We'd caught a few bass but our action had not been fast. Finally, as we were driving to another lake we passed a small, obviously shallow pond.

"Hey, what about that slough?" asked Jerry as he pointed to the marshy pothole.

"I dunno," replied Robert. "I've never bothered to fish it 'cause it's so weedy and small. Besides, with this summer's drought, it's about one-quarter it's usual size."

Jerry's eyes grew wide with excitement and he convinced Robert we should park and make a few casts.

The little pond had a single, six foot deep hole in its middle. It was necessary to wade out about 50 yards to reach the open pocket with a cast. The hole was stiff with hungry bigmouths—ranging from 1 to 6 pounds—and we caught all we wanted. Apparently, at one time the pond was five to six acres in size, and when the water level dropped that summer, the fish jammed in the remaining open water. The only way to have effectively taken bass from that pond was by wading.

Unlike fishing from boats that have depth sounders to reveal the most productive areas for bass, a wader must rely on his eyes and overall angling knowledge to discover the top fishing spots. A wader has to learn to "read" water if he is to consistently catch bigmouths.

The key to finding prime wading areas is to locate places where ▷

there's "something different." Large, shallow, barren flats devoid of cover or bottom structure rarely hold bass. Concentrate your wade fishing on areas where there are "holes" in the lake floor, sandbars, feeder creek mouths, weed clumps, fallen timber, old tree stumps and roots, rocky riprap shorelines, bridge abutments, underwater ledges, driftwood piles, beaver houses and dams, overhanging tree limbs, undercut banks, boat houses and docks—anything that can protect bass in shallow waters, shade them from the sun or harbor bait fish that bass seek.

Savvy wade fishermen plan their strategies well in advance of trips. On new waters they'll carefully study detailed maps of the lake or river they have targeted. Topographic maps of reservoirs and detailed hydrographic charts are as valuable to waders as they are to bassmen working from boats. Such maps help quickly locate the most promising wade-fishing regions. Maps show bottom configurations and can lead a wader to accessible places near drop offs, points of land and other important bass-holding structures. Maps also show where there are bridges (submerged ones, too, on reservoirs), flooded road beds, culverts, ditches, feeder creeks, small dams and other prime bass waters that are best fished via wading. In essence, interpretation of structure is just as important for the wading bass angler as it is for boat fishermen. The ability to read lake and river water often is the determining factor for bass-wading success.

Wading bassmen should be especially mindful to approach all fish-holding areas carefully. In summer and fall many bigmouth waters are as clear as a crystal spring, and fish spook easily if you walk boldly along, scraping your feet on the lake or river floor.

I believe short, accurate casts take more bass for waders than long tosses. Distance casts normally aren't needed by skilled waders if the water is worked quietly, and if the fisherman remains unseen by bass. It's easier to work a lure well and strike properly when there's not a lot of line—say , 60 feet or less—between you and a mossback. In addition, accuracy is increased with short casts. Pinpoint casting is essential when wading many of the South's prime bass waters—which usually are loaded with brush, weeds, lily pads, submerged trees and other structure. Inaccurate casts cost wading anglers fish, terminal tackle and valuable fishing time while they untangle fouled lines. Moreover, top fishing areas often are spoiled when an angler must wade in to free a snagged lure.

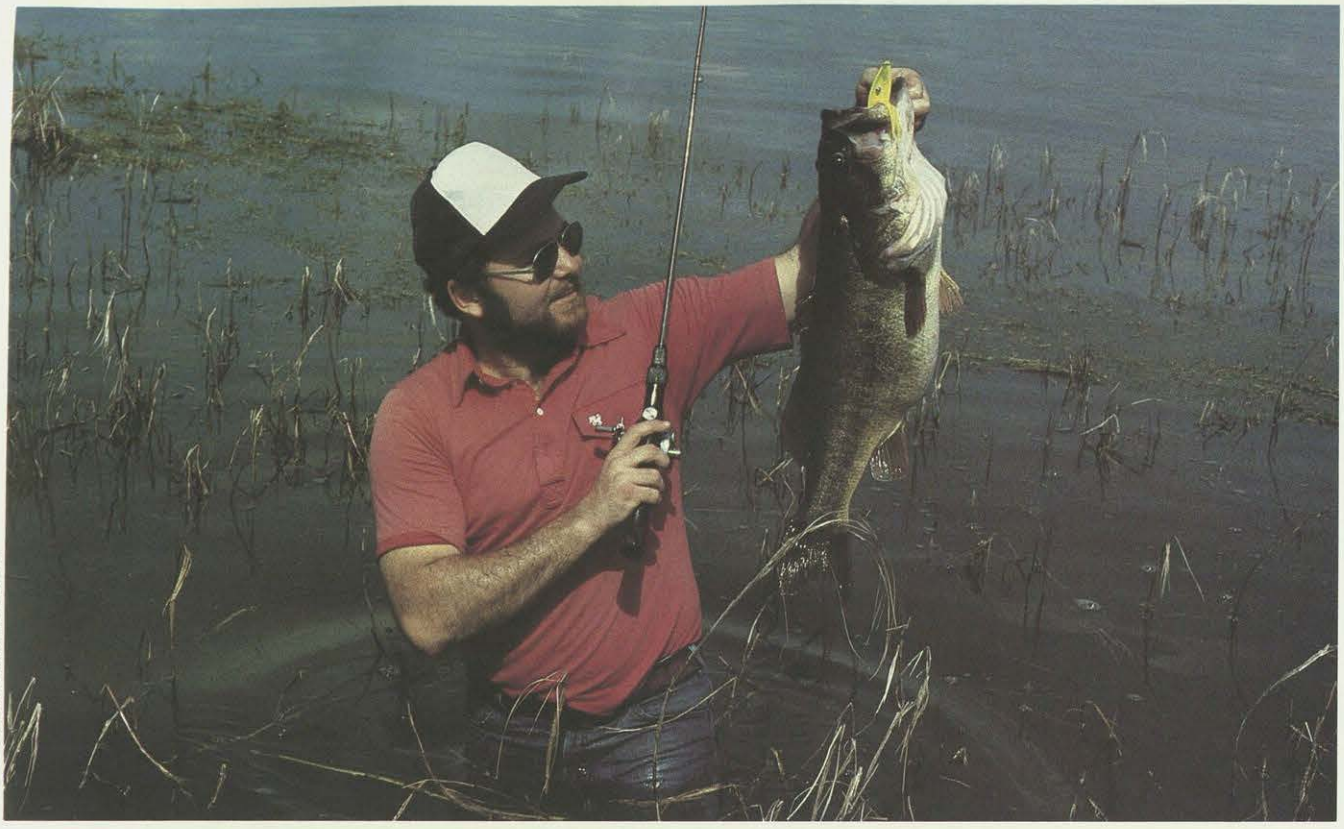
PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB McNALLY

Many anglers who wade and have good luck with bass in spring don't wade in summer or autumn because they've had comparatively poor success. This usually happens because during summer and fall the fishermen work the same shallow bays and bass spawning "flats" where they caught fish in spring. They also use many of the same tactics that worked well early in the season. Trouble is, however, that in summer and fall, bass hold to different areas than they did in spring, and it may take different techniques to catch them.

The best summer-fall wading spots are structures close to deep water. In addition, while spring wade fishing often peaks during the heat of the day when the water is warm enough to get bass moving, summer and fall wading action normally is tops during early mornings, late afternoons, in overcast weather and on slightly breezy days.

Night wading in summer and fall is one of the most overlooked yet most productive methods of catching truly heavyweight mossbacks from Florida waters. Many of the state's stoutest bass only move from deep water or out of tangled cover under the cloak of darkness to forage in waist-deep shallows. Slow, quiet, night wading allows anglers their best chance of catching these pot-belly bigmouths. Short casts with topwater lures can be deadly at night. And since topwater strikes at night sound like explosions, detecting hits and hooking fish is comparatively easy.

Surface plugs and buzz-baits are popular night lures because they aid fishermen in keeping in touch with what their artificials are doing and



PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB McNALLY

Wading for bass in a Florida lake or stream is an exciting way to enjoy the outdoors. Many wading anglers travel to their favorite place by boat, but anchor it while they fish nearby.

where they are located at all times. Tandem-blade spinner-baits and weedless spoons worked on top are favorites, also. A weedless-rigged plastic worm fitted with a buzzing spinner or noisy spoon ahead of it also is a prime night lure for bigmouths.

Wade-fishing gear can be as simple or as elaborate as you like. If all your fishing is done in warm weather and temperate water, "wading-wet" is just the thing. All that's needed is a pair of tennis shoes to protect your feet, short pants, a small plastic box to hold lures, a stringer and your rod and reel. If some of your wading is done in cool water you'll want boots—probably chest-high waders. For much of my bass wading I wear a fishing vest like the ones used by freshwater trout fishermen. Such vests are inexpensive and they have plenty of pockets to carry just about any bass fishing equipment you may need. Spare reels, line, insect repellent and other items can be toted comfortably in a well-designed fishing vest.

Wise bass waders carry a good selection of artificial lures. Surface and diving plugs, spinners, spoons, jigs and plastic worms all should be included in a wader's tackle box. Some waders also use live baits very effectively. Shiners and other minnows are most commonly employed. Baits can be stored in special minnow buckets that are tied to anglers' waist belts and towed behind while fishing.

Finally, wading is something anyone can do on virtually any Florida bass water, at almost any time of year. It is low-cost angling which requires only simple preparation and it is perfect for family outings. Parents and the kids can all enjoy wading for bigmouths.

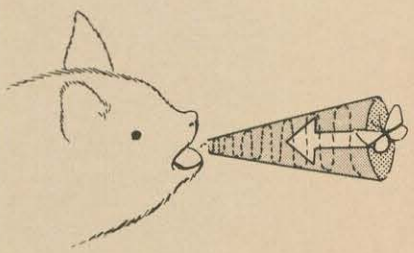
I once thought wading for bass was only meant for those anglers who didn't own a boat or didn't want to rent one. But I've since learned that wading is an enjoyable, serene bass fishing method. Try it for your next catch of shallow-water Florida largemouths.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Alligators rarely attack humans, but wading anglers who enter their territories should exercise caution. Alligator nests and young hatchlings should especially be avoided because females often guard and agressively defend their nests and young. Alligators that are accustomed to humans may be more dangerous than those which have not lost their natural fear of humans. Pulling a stringer of fish through the water may attract a hungry one.

The Emerging Naturalist

by Judy Gillan and Swannee Nardandrea

Bat Chat



Bats find food by echolocation.

Bats are among the most interesting and misunderstood of all **mammals*** but, in truth, bats are beneficial to humans. Most species feed on insects. There are about 1,000 species of bats, of which 70 percent are **insectivorous***. An individual bat can eat thousands of moths, mosquitoes, flies, beetles and roaches every night. Some species even **pollinate*** night-blooming plants, which helps disperse the plants' seeds to new places. Even bats' waste is a valuable plant fertilizer in some countries.

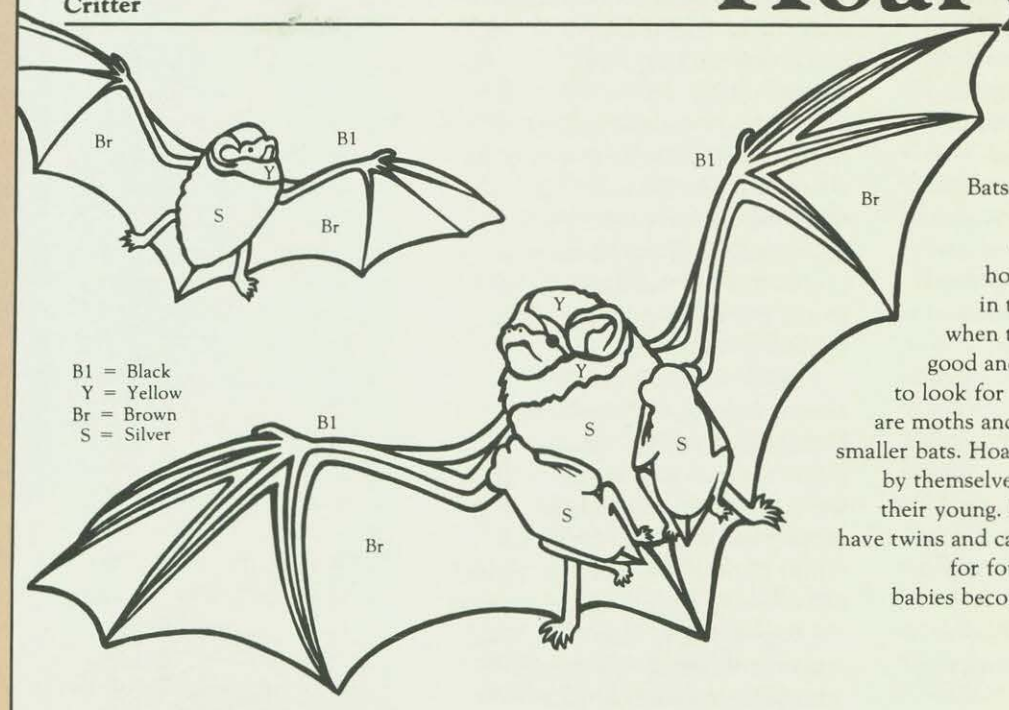
Most bats have a very special way of sensing their environment, called **echolocation***. Bats echolocate by emitting high-pitched sounds that reflect back to their ears as an echo. These sounds are too high-pitched for humans to hear, but when the sounds strike an object and echo, bats can hear them very well.

From these echoes, bats also can determine the distance, direction, size, shape and texture of an object, as well as how fast it is moving. With this **auditory*** information, bats can avoid flying into things and they can find and catch flying insects and other prey.

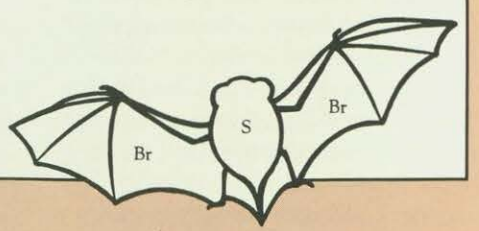
Have you ever heard the phrase "blind as a bat?" Actually, bats can

Color Me Critter

Hoary Bat



Bats are **nocturnal*** creatures, and the **hoary*** bat is no exception. During the day, hoary bats hang upside down in trees to rest and sleep. But, when the sun goes down and it is good and dark, they leave the trees to look for food. Their favorite foods are moths and beetles, and occasionally, smaller bats. Hoary bats usually "hang out" by themselves, except for mothers with their young. Hoary bat mothers usually have twins and carry their young with them for four to five weeks—until the babies become too heavy and must fly on their own.



see, and many see quite well. By combining their eyesight with the added sensory feature of echolocation, bats excel at catching insects in flight.

There are only three known species of **vampire bats*** and all of them live only in Central American or South American rain forests. Only the common vampire bat (*Desmodus rotundus*) feeds exclusively on the blood of other mammals, such as cattle, but these small bats do not drain their victims of blood nor do they turn into lurking, sinister or evil human-like beings.

Another popular myth about bats is that all bats carry **rabies*** or other diseases. Rabies occurs in many mammals, including some bats; however, during the past 30 years, only eight human deaths have been attributed to bat-transmitted rabies. In most of these cases, people were bitten while handling a sick and dying bat. Remember, any animal will bite when scared and bats are no exception. If you find a sick bat lying on the ground, do not handle it!

auditory relating to hearing or the sense organs of hearing.

echolocation a process wherein the location of an object is sensed by the sound waves reflecting off the object.

hoary covered with short, dense gray or white hairs. The hoary bat gets its name from its "frosted" looking fur.

insectivorous feeding or subsisting on insects.

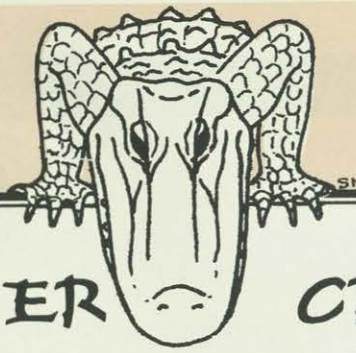
mammal an animal having a backbone and hair or fur on its body. Female mammals feed their young with milk. Almost all mammals are born from the female's body, not hatched from an egg.

nocturnal active at night.

pollinate the transfer of pollen from a flower stamen to a pestil. Pollination is necessary for many plants to form seeds.

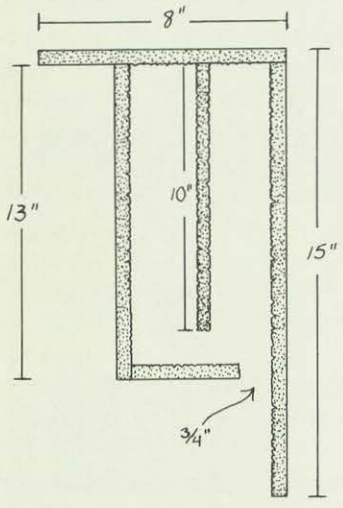
rabies an extremely serious and potentially fatal virus which affects the nervous system of mammals. It can be transmitted by bites.

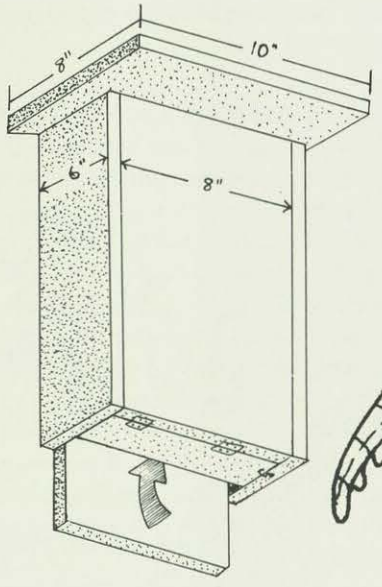
vampire bat a bat that sometimes feeds on the blood of other animals.



CRITTER CRAFTS

Build a Bat House





Bats roost or seek shelter in a variety of places during the daytime. Their resting sites may be inside or outside. For example, hoary bats roost outside in trees, while many other bat species roost inside caves, attics or similar places.

It is not uncommon for bats to occupy man-made bird nesting boxes. This interesting behavior has inspired many conservationists to build specially designed boxes which can attract bats.

If you want to build a bat house, ask your parents or a friend to help you, then, just follow these diagrams.

The most important thing to remember when building a bat house is the width of the entry space. The ideal width is about 3/4 inch. It is best not to exceed one inch in width. Use wood which has rough surfaces. This allows bats to climb easily in and out of the boxes.

When complete, securely attach your bat house to a tree trunk or to the side of a building, between 12 and 15 feet above the ground. In Florida, bat houses should be placed in shady locations to prevent temperatures inside the house from exceeding 90 degrees F, which is too hot for bats.

It is very important to remember that bats can only live where local food supplies are good. Most bats live near rivers, lakes or swamps, where insect numbers are high. The closer your bat houses are to feeding areas, the greater the chances they will be used.

It is hard to predict how soon your bat houses might become occupied. Sometimes bats move in within a few weeks, but more often, they require a year or two to find a new house. You can increase the chances of occupancy if you hang your bat house before early-April.

If any bats move into your bat house, let us know, or write to Bat Conservation International; c/o Brackenridge Field Laboratory; University of Texas; Austin, TX, 78712.

Hunter Education News

By Lieutenant Byron Stalvey
Hunter Education Officer

As hunters, we have a responsibility to do our very best to recover downed game. Usually this is a relatively easy task, but sometimes it is a challenge. Here are some basic guidelines to make recovering downed game less difficult:

Recovering big game is usually more difficult than for most small game species, especially if it runs after being hit. The best first step after your shot is to remain in place a short time before attempting to trail a wounded animal. You don't want to spook it into running farther away. You do, however, want to note the direction in which it went, and to pick out a landmark where you last saw the animal as it left the area. If rain or snow threatens, you may need to begin trailing sooner.

When you begin trailing, start at the spot where the animal was when you shot. Check the area thoroughly for blood, hair, an arrow (if you are a bow hunter) or other signs that verify a hit. Remember to trail quietly at all times so you don't spook the game with loud sounds or talking.

Even if you find no blood sign, mark the beginning of the trail with easy-to-see material. Brightly colored plastic tape makes an excellent marker. Most hardware and department stores stock this material in several colors. Be sure to pick up all your tape or other material after you have recovered the game so you don't litter the area.

As you track, moving in the direction the animal was traveling, check for blood sign on rocks, bushes and other objects above the ground. You may even find it necessary to rub red-colored spots, such as those sometimes found on fall leaves, to determine if they are blood or not. This lets you sight back along your flag line to get a better idea of the animal's direction of travel.

You should stay to the side of the trail so you don't disturb or obliterate it. If you lose it, check for signs along any visible game trails you can find in the vicinity for a half-mile. Different or abnormal scuff marks or tracks can also indicate a wounded animal traveled a particular trail.

If you lose the trail and cannot re-establish it, try walking in expanding circles or use a grid-type search pattern, beginning at the last sign, until you locate the trail again. The amount of cover can help determine how far apart your circles or grids should be. For example, in heavy grass or brush, they should be no more than five or six feet apart. Move slowly and look closely when searching for signs.

If an animal is shot late in the day and darkness begins setting in, get yourself a good light source. Gas or kerosene lanterns are a good choice. Be sure to leave your firearm or bow in your vehicle or camp before starting to trail any animal at night, as Florida law prohibits the possession of a gun (or other firearm, including a bow) and a light in the field at night.

Many hunters have commented that it is often easier to trail a wounded animal after dark because droplets of blood are more visible in artificial light than in sunlight.

It is even more important to mark or flag the trail after dark; first to give yourself a better chance to relocate the trail if you should lose it; and secondly, to help you find your way back.

Here are a few additional tips that may help locate downed game:

- Remember to look at individual objects—not merely the whole trail. A drop of blood can be very tiny and hard to see if you fail to look closely.
- Sometimes a wounded animal will circle back to where it came from. With this in mind you might try checking back on the trail the animal traveled just before the shot.
- Consider checking major game trail crossings or in swamps or streams if the trail leads in that direction.
- Remember that wounded animals will often travel downhill or towards water.

Once you find your animal, approach it cautiously and move in quietly—from the rear if possible. Hunters have been injured when a wounded game animal suddenly jumped to its feet and ran over them. The eyes are usually the best indicator of whether game is dead or alive. If they are closed, it is probably alive, but if they are glazed or unblinking, the animal is dead and safe to approach.

If the animal is down and still alive, try to get close enough for another shot, placing your shot so as to kill the animal quickly and cleanly.

If you would like to learn more about trailing and recovering big game, consider enrolling in the Commission's free bow hunting course, which is taught through the Hunter Education Program. The course is open to everyone, not just to bow hunters. To find out the time and location of the next course in your area, contact the Hunter Education Officer at your nearest Commission regional office. Toll-free telephone numbers are listed inside the front cover of most telephone directories, and here on page 48.

FLORIDA 1987–88 HUNTING SEASONS

RESIDENT GAME

SHOOTING HOURS

One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset.
Spring Turkey Season: One-half hour before sunrise to 1 p.m.

SPECIES	NORTHWEST REGION	OTHER REGIONS	LIMITS DAILY	SEASON	POSSESSION
Deer*	Nov. 14 - Jan. 24	Nov. 14 - Jan. 10	2		3
Wild Hog**	Nov. 14 - Jan. 24	Nov. 14 - Jan. 10	1		2
Turkey	Nov. 14 - Jan. 10		1	2	2
Turkey Gobbler (Spring Season)	Mar. 19 - Apr. 24		1	2	2
Quail	Nov. 14 - Mar. 6		12		24
Squirrel			12 Gray Squirrel 2 Fox Squirrel		24 Gray Squirrel 4 Fox Squirrel
Rabbit	Open Year-round		12		24

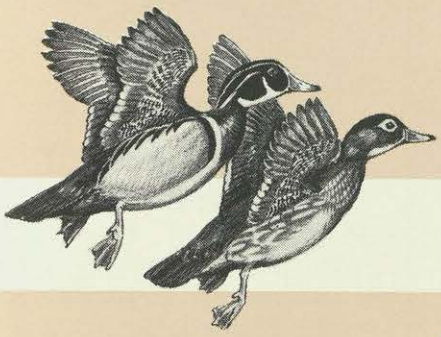
*Deer of either sex may be taken statewide November 28 & 29. (This does not apply to Type I and Type II wildlife management areas).

**Wild Hogs (where classified as game animals). For information concerning hogs as legal game consult the *Florida Hunting Handbook Regulations Summary* for 1987-88.

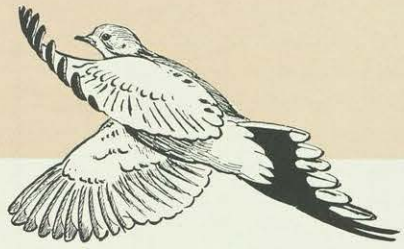
Bear may be taken in Baker and Columbia counties during the established open season for taking deer and by special permit on designated wildlife management areas; limit 1 per hunter.

OPEN SEASONS (Unless stated otherwise) ARCHERY: October 3 - November 1 and September 5 - October 4 in that portion of Florida south of S.R. 72 to Arcadia and S.R. 70 to Ft. Pierce. MUZZLELOADING GUN: November 6-8. SPECIAL ARCHERY/MUZZLELOADING GUN: February 6-21 in the Northwest Region only. GENERAL GUN: November 14 - January 24 in the Northwest Region only and November 14 - January 10 in the remainder of Florida. SPRING TURKEY: March 19 - April 24 statewide. Due to the high use of most wildlife management areas by the public, it has become necessary to impose quotas to limit the number of persons using most of these areas during peak times of the season.

See "*Florida Hunting Handbook Regulations Summary for 1987-88*" for additional rules, regulations and seasonal information. See "*Florida Freshwater Sport Fishing Guide and Regulations Summary 1987-88*" for fishing and frogging rules and regulations.



MIGRATORY GAME



SHOOTING HOURS

Shooting hours for migratory game birds (except doves):
one-half hour before sunrise to sunset. Dove hunting from noon to sunset during first phase, one-half hour before sunrise to sunset during phases 2 and 3.

SPECIES	STATEWIDE	DAILY BAG LIMITS	POSSESSION LIMITS
Marsh Hen	Sept. 1 - Nov. 9		
	King and Clapper Rails	15	30 Singly or in Aggregate
	Sora and Virginia Rails	25	25 Singly or in Aggregate
	Moorhen (Florida Gallinule)	15	30
Special Duck*	Sept. 26 - 30	4	8
Mourning & White-winged Dove	Oct. 3 - Oct. 25 Nov. 14 - Nov. 29 Dec. 12 - Jan. 10	Bag limit is 12 doves daily, 24 in possession (including no more than 4 white-winged doves daily and 8 in possession).	
Snipe	Nov. 1 - Feb. 15	8	16
Woodcock	Dec. 12 - Jan. 25	3	6
Duck* (2 phases)	Nov. 25 - Nov. 29 Dec. 15 - Jan. 18	100 Points*	2 Legal Daily Bag Limits
Coot*	Nov. 25 - Nov. 29 Dec. 15 - Jan. 18	15	30

*See "*1987-88 Migratory Game Bird Regulations For Duck and Coot*" and "*1987-88 Migratory Game Bird Regulations For Dove, Snipe, Woodcock, Rail, Moorhen, Crow and Early Duck Season*" for details.

Conservation Update

Compiled By John Waters Jr.

1987 Spring Ducks Count Is Mostly Low

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) reports that 1987 spring populations of several species of ducks are unchanged from last year. "...Duck numbers have not rebounded as quickly as everyone had hoped they would," said Frank Dunkle of FWS.

Although the mallard and American wigeon populations enjoyed modest gains over last year's counts, there was a 22 percent drop in the numbers of blue-winged teal since 1986. Pintails also continued to decline.

The annual surveys of the duck populations are conducted by teams of FWS and Canadian biologists. This year, they found six of 10 major duck species are significantly below their average numbers for a 32-year period ending in 1986. The six declining species are the mallard, American wigeon, blue-winged teal, Northern pintail, canvasback and scaup. The four species that showed increases in the average populations are the gadwall, green-winged teal, Northern shoveler and redhead.

Following several years of drought in North America's prime duck nesting areas, the 1985 count of breeding ducks was the lowest recorded by FWS since the counts began in 1955. To help the populations recover, duck hunting was restricted last fall.

Breeding habitat in the Canadian prairies breeding areas during spring of this year were somewhat deteriorated due to a mild winter and an early spring dry spell. However, habitat in much of Alaska, Montana and northern Canada was generally good, FWS said.

St. Johns River– Fish Disease Incidence Low

During the spring of 1987, a seemingly high number of fish infected with ulcers and other lesions were reportedly being caught in the St. Johns River. Most of the affected were gizzard shad or menhaden—both saltwater species which migrate into the St. Johns drainage system.

Four recent months of investigations since then by University of Florida ichthyologist George Burgess, however, have shown only "three or four fish out of every 10,000" have lesions. His studies also have found affected fish as far upstream as Lake George, but there too, the incidence has been low.

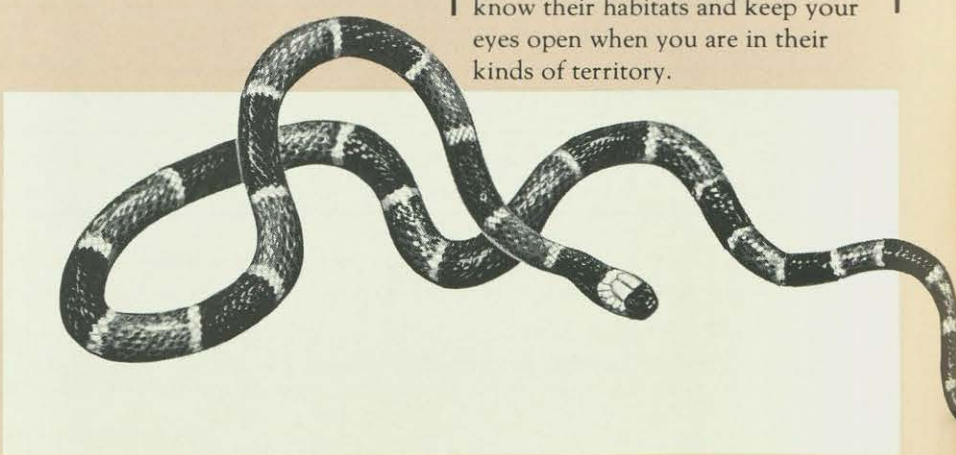
Burgess says the disease is caused by bacteria which initially attack the fish from outside, but gradually infect their way inside. The same symptoms have been found in fish elsewhere, as far north as Chesapeake Bay.

He also notes the disease could be seasonal and may show a higher incidence at other times of the year. He began his studies in April. To further understand the problem and its significance, University of South Florida, Mote Marine Laboratory and North Carolina State University in Raleigh are also participating in studies of the fish and the water in the river.

U.S. Venomous Animals Rarely Cause Death

Although eight common venomous animals are responsible for some 15 human deaths a year, this number is relatively small when the numbers of people going outdoors each year in the United States is considered. According to *Fatal Facts*, stings from wasps and yellow jackets are responsible for an average of seven deaths annually and rattlesnake bites cause an average of six more deaths each year. Ticks, black widow spiders, copperheads, hornets and ants are the other species which sometimes kill humans.

In Florida, an average of 40 venomous snake bites occur each year, but death rarely results. The best way of avoiding the possibility of undesirable encounters with venomous snakes, spiders and insects is to understand their habits, know their habitats and keep your eyes open when you are in their kinds of territory.



America's Anglers and Hunters Spend $872 Million

Expenditures for state hunting and fishing licenses amounted to $624 million during 1986. Another $248 million was paid in federal excise taxes, earning a whopping $872 million dollars for America's fish and wildlife programs. Florida's fishing license sales for 1986 were nearly $5.8 million and hunting license and permit sales were a little more than $4 million.

4-1/2 Million Florida Acres Open For Public Hunting

The Commission's public Wildlife Management Area Program is providing some 4-1/2million acres of open hunting land this season. Sixty areas are open in the state's five regions. Hunting, however, is only one of the recreational activities provided in the program. Many areas also offer fishing, frogging, camping and other uses during the year.

Regulations and maps of all areas are available free from the Commission's regional offices and from county tax collectors and many of their subagents throughout the state.

Single Hunting/Fishing License On Sale

The 1987 Florida Legislature approved the "Florida Resident Sportsman's License" earlier this year, and it can be purchased throughout Florida at county tax collectors' offices and from their subagents. Priced at $40, plus a $1.50 issuance fee, it is equivalent to hunting and freshwater fishing licenses and Wildlife Management Area, Muzzleloading Gun, Archery, Florida Turkey and Florida Waterfowl stamps. Purchased separately, these currently cost $52. The new license does not allow trapping or commercial operations nor does it meet the requirement to purchase a federal "Duck Stamp" to hunt waterfowl.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE Receives Awards

FLORIDA WILDLIFE received a Bronze Award of Excellence in September from the Florida Magazine Association (FMA), in its most competitive contest ever. The recognition was for the magazine's overall design, content and editorial excellence.

It was the 31st year FMA has sponsored the annual competition. In all categories, 104 magazines were judged by two-tiered teams of professionals from several Florida universities and various media-related industries throughout the United States.

A Charlie Award (equivalent to first place) for Best Illustrated Artice in a category was also given to FLORIDA WILDLIFE for Rick Sullivan's illustrated article, "Gator Research Takes Off," which ran in our January-February 1987 issue.

NATURE NOTES

***The Eastern Chipmunk**, in Florida, occurs only in a very limited range in the extreme northwestern part of the state.*

***30,000 Species of Spiders** inhabit Earth and two of them that are seriously poisonous to humans, the black widow and the brown recluse, live in Florida.*

***Florida's Underground Water System** once was thought to be protected by impermeable clay layers; however, new evidence indicates thousands of lakes may serve as transport channels through which pollutants flow to the state's aquifers.*

***Ground (Bull) Sharks** sometimes enter freshwater rivers. This species may grow to 10 feet in length and ranges from Brazil to as far north as New York (rarely).*

***Monarch Butterflies** have a reputation for being "distasteful" to birds; however, some birds readily prey on the monarch.*

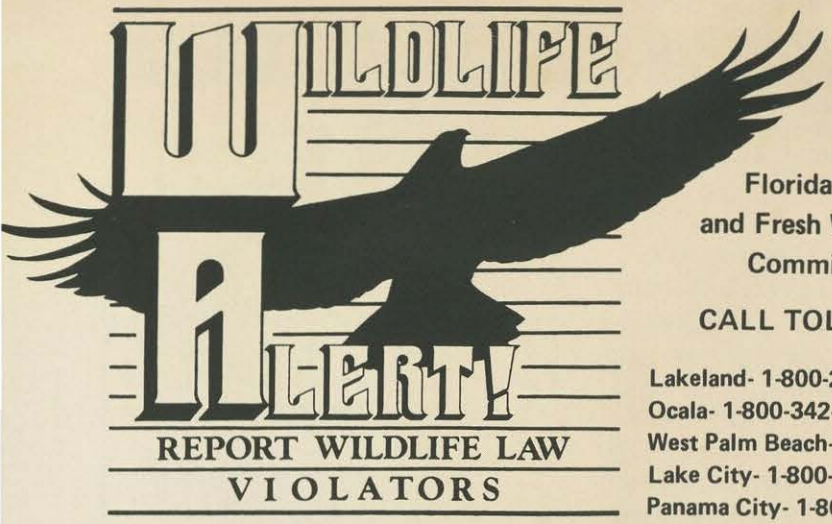
***94 Species of Wild Mammals** are currently found in Florida. Ten of these have been introduced or have recently expanded their ranges into the state.*

***Roaches** in some tropical lands grow as long as six inches.*

***Bald Eagles** currently nest in only 10 of the United States.*

***More Than Half of America's Adults** feed, observe or photograph wildlife; one-fourth of them go fishing and one in 10 goes hunting.*

***Sulfur Dioxide** emissions in the Southeast have increased by five times since 1950, causing greater concerns about the damaging effects of acid rain formation resulting from the combination of the sulfur dioxide with atmospheric water.*



Florida Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission

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41

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Environmental Services

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Informational Services

Regional Offices

Northwest Region
T.L. GARRISON, Director
Route 4, Box 759
Panama City, FL 32405
(904) 265-3676

Northeast Region
LARRY MARTIN, Director
Route 7, Box 440
Lake City, FL 32055
(904) 752-0353

Central Region
ROBERT B. BUTLER, Director
1239 S.W. 10th Street
Ocala, FL 32674
(904) 629-8162

South Region
J.O. BROWN, Director
3900 Drane Field Road
Lakeland, FL 33803
(813) 644-9269

Everglades Region
DAN DUNFORD, Director
551 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33415
(305) 683-0748

Floridana

At least as far back as the 1830s, a conspicuous feature of the wilderness southeast of Tallahassee was a mysterious plume of smoke that rose, year in and year out, from the watery jungle of the Wacissa Swamp.

Local Indians said the smoke had always been there, but some White residents thought it came from Indian campfires. Others guessed it marked a settlement of runaway slaves, the camp of pirates and smugglers or the "grandpappy of all whiskey stills." But as years rolled by and the smoke continued to rise unfailingly, it began to appear unlikely that any of these could be the source.

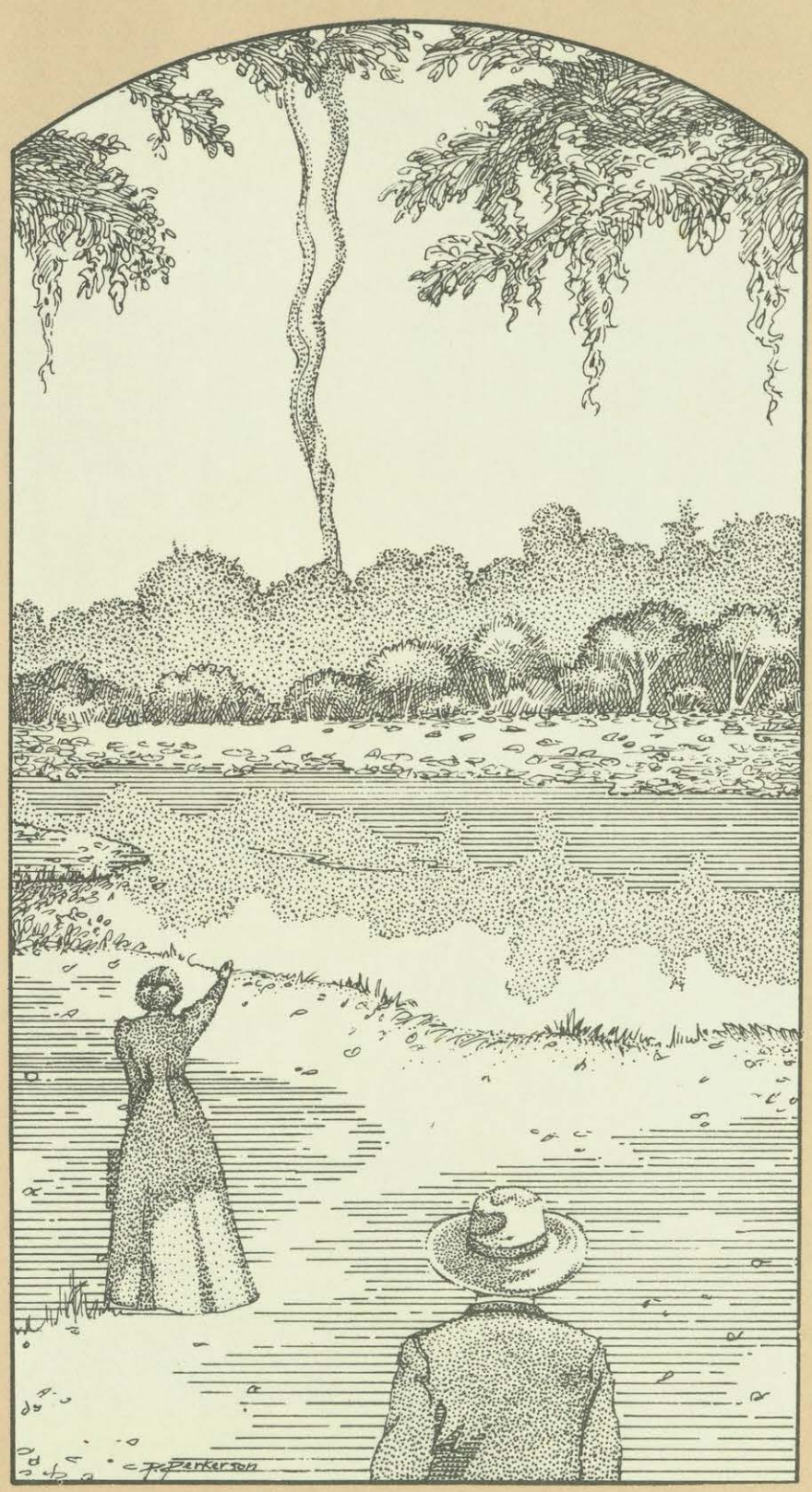
The appearance of the smoke column was variable. Sometimes it rose straight into the sky, and other times it swirled and spiraled aloft. Occasionally it died to a mere wisp or haze. Sometimes it was inky black and at other times gray or white.

Why didn't someone solve the mystery by investigating the smoke? At that time, travel in Florida's swamps, besides being difficult, could be extremely dangerous.

Many an area resident who saw the smoke from the "Wacissa Volcano," as some began calling the mysterious plume, had also seen raiding parties of Seminoles in the area and had no intention of blundering into what might possibly be an encampment of fierce warriors. So, speculation regarding the smoke continued down through the years.

In 1886, the Tallahassee area was rocked by an earthquake and its tremors were felt over a wide area of the Southeast. When the terrifying tremors stopped, Tallahassee eyes turned southeastward to the smoke, but it was gone.

For the first time in at least a half-century the sky was perfectly clear where the smoke plume had been seen, and it has never been seen again. Despite several attempts, "Florida's lost volcano" has never been pinpointed.



WACISSA VOLCANO

[Extracted from an article by Wilfred T. Neill, *Florida Wildlife*, June 1963.]